SEXUAL POLITICS

IN

ROUSSEAU'S *EMILE*

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For my mother

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Contents

Abstract

Rousseau's *Emile* is an amalgamation of a novel, political philosophy tract, and pedagogical treatise that considers sexual politics. Its sexual politics takes into account the implications and dynamics of male-female relations so as to understand how power relations between the sexes affect their roles in existing society. It is my contention that instead of merely reinforcing traditional gender differences, sexual politics in *Emile* seek to create of the ideal citizen and the ideal state. I believe sexual politics creates the ideal state (Sophie) by 'endowing her with the ability to see through others, discern what is in their hearts, and transform them'. This, in turn, allows her to transform the delicately bred man into an ideal citizen (Emile). She does so by keeping him enthralled with the virtues she embodies. These virtues ensure that Emile is able to survive in existing civil society without being corrupted by it.

(27,168 words)

System of References

Within the body of this dissertation, abbreviations will be used to refer to Rousseau's various works. These, as well as the details of their translations are given below:

Alembert — *Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theatre*, translated, with notes and an introduction by Allan Bloom, Illinois, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960

References made thus: title, page number

Em — *Emile or On Education*, with an introduction, translation and notes by Allan Bloom, New York, Basic Books, 1979.

References made thus: title, book number, page number

Femmes — 'Sur les femmes' in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. II, Paris Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1964. My translation.

References made thus: title, page number

Poland — 'Considerations on the Government of Poland' in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

References made thus: title, book number, chapter number

SC — 'Social Contract' in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

References made thus: title, book number, chapter number, paragraph number.

Chapter 1. Introduction

"We are sick with evils that can be cured; and nature having brought us forth sound, itself helps us if we wish to be improved."

Seneca, *On Anger*, II. 13.

Emile or On Education[1] is an amalgamation of a novel, political philosophy tract and pedagogical treatise. Contrary to its deceptively straightforward title, *Emile or On Education* is not solely about Emile the title character and his education. It also contains a section on female education. The main female character, Sophie, is destined to be Emile's wife. Her education and its purpose appear towards the end of Book IV and continue in Book V. While her 'whole education …ought to relate to men', 'please men, to be useful to them, to make herself loved and honoured by them, to raise them when young, to counsel them, to console them, to make their lives agreeable and sweet' (Em V, 365), Emile appears to be brought up to be independent and unaffected by the opinions of others. Thus, in considering Sophie's education and her purpose in life vis-à-vis Emile's, Rousseau seemingly contradicts himself. Although he claims 'both [sexes] had the same education', the female is brought up to be passive and submissive, and the male, independent. Despite her ostensible subservience to the male, the female is to guide and shape him. In his analysis as to their interactions with one another, Rousseau asserts that the male and female are 'both masters'. With these seeming contradictions, Rousseau has engendered several debates on Sophie's role in *Emile*, as well as the meaning of Sophie's presence and her interactions with Emile. These debates then have given rise to questions on the nature and purpose of the sexual politics in *Emile*.

[1] All subsequent references to Rousseau's *Emile* will be taken and quoted from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, with an introduction, translation and notes by Allan Bloom, New York, Basic Books, 1979.

Background to Rousseau's *Emile*

All of Rousseau's non-biographical writings are intensely political for they speak of his desire to 'realis[e] in the modern world a republic of virtues to rival the Greek polis and the Roman republic, an amalgam of order and spontaneity where individual citizens partake freely in a relationship of unity.'[2] In the *First Discourse*, Rousseau argues that the restoration of the sciences and the arts has not a purifying effect on morals because it leads to vanity and thence to moral decline. Such a moral decline will mean that people are no longer able to cultivate true virtue (that is, sentiment and compassion), and by extension, are unable to serve the state as good citizens. The *Second Discourse* continues this theme of human beings' corruption through their desire for self-distinction. Rousseau extends the theme by saying that the government's encouragement of the proliferation of the arts and sciences reinforces human vanity and is contrary to justice. In the *Third Discourse* or the *Discourse on Political Economy*, Rousseau lays the foundation for the *Social Contract* and the *Considerations on the Government of Poland* by stating the necessity of general will to preserve the welfare of the people, as it is the source of the laws. The *Considerations on the Government of Poland* highlights Rousseau's emphasis on the formation of national character through the maintenance of a state's citizens'

[2] Christopher Bertram, *Rousseau and the Social Contract*, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 9. Rousseau speaks of this amalgam and the benefits it may yield to individual citizens in his conceived of Geneva – cf. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. d'Alembert*, translated with notes and an introduction by Allan Bloom, Illinois, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960, p. 135n; and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men or Second Discourse', in *The Discourses and other early political writings*, Victor Gourevitch, ed., and trans., Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 114-123. He states in the epistle to the Second Discourse that this 'republic of virtue' (as he saw Geneva in its idealised form) would be one where, 'The sovereign and the people could have only one and the same interest, so that all the motions of the machine might always tend only to the common happiness; since it is impossible unless the people and the sovereign are the same person, it follows that I shall have wished to be born under a democratic government wisely tempered.'

common bonds of unity and attachment. Any attenuation of such bonds leads to the 'atomised, egoistic individualism'[3] of the *First* and *Second Discourses*. The *Social Contract* addresses the problems of vanity (*amour propre*) by proposing a distinction between sovereignty, political authority and legitimacy in the formation of a just and humane political community. *Emile* adds to the theme of dealing with excess *amour propre* through the title character's socio-political and sexual educations.

I believe that Rousseau seeks to prevent the ills prevalent in society (and perpetuated in the study of the sciences and arts) from corrupting Emile and Sophie by educating Emile as the ideal citizen and Sophie as the ideal state (*la patrie*). These writings show that Rousseau seeks to expose 'the abuses of our institutions' and 'demonstrate that man is naturally good and that it is from these institutions alone that men become wicked.'[4] Therefore, it can be said that *Emile* seeks to address and prevent the causes of man's wickedness.

Details of *Emile*

Emile arose from Rousseau's quest to rescue our naturally pure drives from social corruption.[5] Rousseau underlines the ills of this corruption in the opening lines of *Emile*, 'Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of all things; everything degenerates in the hands of man' (Em I, 6). He continues in the second paragraph of Book I, 'Prejudices, authority, necessity, example, *all the social institutions*, in which we

[3] Nicholas Dent, *Rousseau*, London, Routledge, 2005, p. 176.
[4] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Letter to Malesherbes, 12 January 1762', in *The Confessions and Correspondence, including the Letters to Malesherbes*, The Collected Writings of Rousseau, Vol. 5, Christopher Kelly, trans., Christopher Kelley, Roger D. Masters and Peter G. Stillman, eds., Hanover and London, University Press of New England, 1995, p. 575.
[5] Timothy O'Hagan, *Rousseau*, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 59.

find ourselves submerged would stifle nature in him and put nothing in its place' (Em I, 37, my emphasis). *Emile* deals with this corruption through an exposition of a theory on human relations and domination, a theory of language acquisition, an account of human sexuality and its role on civil relations, a summary of Rousseau's political philosophy and an account of natural theology.

Book I touches on the infancy of the child. Rousseau calls this the 'age of nature' and outlines the roles of the mother and father during their child's infancy. However, Emile is taken to be an orphan. As such, he is brought up by a tutor, whom Rousseau claims is necessary to Emile's development so as to prevent him from acquiring any bad habits.

Book II continues the 'age of nature' in its description of Emile's education between the ages of two and twelve when the tutor has full responsibility over his charge. The child is seemingly taught to be dependent on things and himself rather than on others. Emile's education in Book II deals with his physical education, sensory education, intellectual development, character development and education of sensibility. The tutor employs negative education in teaching him. This is opposed to positive education or direct instruction to the pupil. In negative education, Emile discovers the practical applications of objects in nature (such as stars) for himself.[6] Negative education stems from Rousseau's attempt to preserve the natural goodness of the child. This is because he believed '[n]ature made man happy and good, but society depraves him and makes him

[6] Heather E. Wallace, *Sophie: Women's Education according to Rousseau and Wollstonecraft*. Online. Available HTTP:<http://georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/english016/franken/sophie.txt> (Accessed 14 February 2006).

miserable.'[7] Hence, Emile is prevented from learning things that might corrupt his natural goodness and render him dependent on the ills present in society. As such, there is no moral instruction at this stage, only the development of his physical qualities and his senses. Instead of forcing his charge to learn, the tutor deploys subtle methods to get Emile to learn by asking, 'what is it good for?'

Book III, dubbed the 'age of force', highlights Emile's education from ages twelve to fifteen. It draws our attention to Emile's intellectual education. He will learn when he is ready to and is interested in the topic; thus in this way, he learns language, geography, science and history. Emile's education in Book III extends the concept of negative education in emphasising the practical application of everything he learns. Emile's studies from ages twelve to fifteen is an extension of his usual activities. Through these activities, Emile learns about the importance of labour and social relations with others.

Moral and religious educations are elucidated in Book IV and takes place between Emile's fifteenth to twentieth years. Here, Emile is taught to love truth, wisdom and their attendant virtues. Through the Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar (narrated to Emile by the tutor), Emile is introduced to a personal belief system and allegiance that would be proper to his education in accordance with the requirements for the cultivation and preservation of his [innately good] nature.'[8] This teaches Emile to recognise and accept the limits of human effort and ingenuity. This social and religious education commences Emile's civil education. As Emile starts to socialise with others at the age of sixteen, he learns the ways in which he can respect himself. He is able to do so because

[7] Helen Evans Misenheimer, *Rousseau on the Education of* Women, Washington D. C., University Press of America, 1981, p. 19.
[8] Dent, *Rousseau*, p. 107

his previous education was geared towards insulating him from society's harmful influences.

Towards the end of Book IV, Rousseau briefly lays down the purpose of female education. This theme is continued in Book V. However, Book V is not only about Sophie's education (or women's education in general) for it concerns Emile as well. Book V covers the 'age of wisdom and marriage' when Emile is between the ages of twenty to twenty-five. In his search for and eventual interaction with Sophie, Emile learns how to live in society while sojourning in Paris. These travels enable him to learn about politics (indeed, for Emile, his sexual education is very much linked to his political one) and people in the civil state. Sophie, on the other hand, is brought up quite differently from Emile in that her education constrains her in her role as a 'modest' coquette. On returning from his travels, Emile decides to live a quiet life with Sophie away from the temptations and corruptions of the city. The book ends with their marriage and the news that Sophie is expecting their first child. This supposedly happy ending of *Emile* belies the true effects of their divergent educations, as the unfinished sequel attests.

Details of *Emile et Sophie*

Emile et Sophie ou Les Solitaires is the uncompleted epistolary sequel to *Emile*. In it, Emile pours out his troubles to his tutor. We are told in the first letter (the only complete segment of this work) that Emile and Sophie have two children, a boy and a girl. The tutor then leaves Emile and Sophie to their own devices. As soon as he does so, Sophie's parents die, as does Emile's and Sophie's daughter. Despite all the tutor's warnings about the corruptions and temptations in big cities in *Emile* and Sophie's

protests, Emile decides to take Sophie and their son to Paris in the belief that the amusements there will mitigate her grief. In Paris, they make the acquaintance of another couple. While Emile immerses himself in the distractions of Paris, he falls prey to temptation and seduction. This subsequently causes him to neglect his wife and son. Sophie turns to her new female friend. This friend plies Sophie with erotic love novels. Neglected by Emile and frustrated by her desires, Sophie succumbs to seduction and becomes pregnant by another man. She reveals her transgression to a shocked Emile. Emile tries to calm himself by first going for a long walk, then seeking employment in a nearby town so that he can think things over. Sophie is unable to forgive herself for her transgression.[9] Because of her infidelity and her resultant pregnancy, Sophie feels that she is no longer worthy of Emile. Although he admires Sophie's honesty and blames himself for her infidelity, Emile feels that he must no longer retain her as his wife. Sophie accedes to his decision as she feels she is now completely undeserving of him. Briefly, Emile considers taking their son away from her, but he soon determines that the child needs his mother's care. Thus, he sets his affairs in order and leaves.

The second letter reveals how Emile is keeping after his separation. He is now employed onboard a ship. However, everyone onboard is captured by pirates and subsequently sold into slavery. Unable to bear the injustices perpetrated by his brutal overseer, Emile leads an uprising of slaves against him. This, along with the level-headed demands he makes, impresses the master, and Emile is made overseer. Here, the letter

[9] Emile writes admiringly of Sophie's behaviour after the revelation of her infidelity, 'She was aware that I was rational but weak; and I know only too well how inflexible her proud and sublime soul would be towards her own faults. The idea of Sophie restored to grace was insupportable to her. She felt that her lapse was one which could not be forgiven. This kind of pardon was not made for one such as her; even punishment (were it meted out) would not be as harsh as her opinion of herself.' Cf. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Emile et Sophie, ou Les Solitaires', in *Oeuvres Complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Vol. 4, Paris, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1969, pp. 909-110, my translation.

trails off. The plans for the rest of *Emile et Sophie* that Rousseau confided to Pierre Prevost and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, as well as the hints in the manuscript and his preparatory notes reveal that Emile will retire to a desert island rich in fruit.[10] In that haven, Emile will come upon a good old gentleman and a lovely young Spanish woman, whom he will marry. Sophie then arrives on this island; Emile takes her as his second wife. However, Sophie soon dies because she is unable to forgive herself for her infidelity. Before she does so, she leaves behind a letter for Emile, explaining the circumstances that led to her infidelity.

Hence, *Emile* and *Emile et Sophie* demonstrate the problems arising from the title characters' different educations and the crucial role of sexual politics in determining their fates.

Sexual Politics

The disparity in Emile and Sophie's educations has engendered much debate and controversy. Most commentators stress that *Emile* is about Emile's education, thereby ignoring Sophie's education or at best, glossing over it.[11] This is because they deem it to have no bearing on the education of Emile. Modern feminist readers of Rousseau

[10] For more information on Rousseau's notes and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's account of the rest of *Emile et Sophie*, please see Pierre Burgelin's introduction to *Emile et Sophie* in *Oeuvres Complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, vol. 4, pp. clxi-clxvii, Charles Wirz, 'Note sur *Emile et Sophie, ou les Solitaires*', *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau* 36, 1963-65, pp. 291-303, and Guy Turbot-Delof, 'A propos d'*Emile et Sophie*', *Revue d'Historie Littéraire de la France*, 64, 1963, pp. 44-59.

[11] Stephen Ellenburg, John Hall, Roger Masters and Mark Claudis are some of the commentators who concentrate on the importance of Emile's education, thereby glossing over Sophie's education. Masters spends two chapters of his seminal *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* on Emile's education but only one page on Sophie's education. Refer to contents page of Roger D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968. See also Stephen Ellenburg, *Rousseau's Political Philosophy: An Interpretation from Within*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1976; John C. Hall, *Rousseau: An Introduction to his Political Philosophy*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1973; and Mark S. Claudis, *Public Vision, Private Lives: Rousseau, Religion and 21st Century Democracy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003.

however object to the differing effects of male and female educations – whereas males are brought up to be individualistic and free, females are educated to be submissive and dependent. While the casual reader of *Emile* might agree with the feminist readings of Book V, it must be borne in mind that an understanding of Rousseau's education project entails an understanding of the arguments of both critics and defenders of Emile's and Sophie's educations. A close study of these critiques reveals that these divergent opinions arise from the ambiguities within Rousseau's treatment of women and sexuality. It is through these ambiguities that *Emile* brings to light the issue of sexual politics, that is, the 'analysis of gender differences and power relations between the sexes.'[12]

Sexual politics may be understood as power relations between men and women in formal groups and in the family.[13] It considers the character of relations between men and women, and their implications. This naturally encompasses an understanding as to what is a man or woman and what it means to be a man or a woman. Views on human sexuality are also considered in sexual politics, for they determine how one constructs each gender. Today, sexual politics also encompasses the 'war of the sexes'; it includes an analysis of the perceived roles of men and women, 'the struggle on the domestic front for women's control over their own reproduction, for parity in household labour, for equal involvement of male and female parents in childcare, and for admission of women's equal sexual needs and rights.'[14] It also involves each gender's usage of their sexuality to manipulate the other. Indeed, this is perfectly in line with Rousseau's notion of gender

[12] Mary Seidman Trouille, *Sexual Politics in the Enlightenment: Women Writers read Rousseau*, Albany, SUNY Press, 1997, p. 1.
[13] Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, London, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1971, p. 24
[14] Micaela di Leonardo and Roger Lancaster, 'Gender, Sexuality, Political Economy', *New Politics*, 6, no. 10, Summer 1996. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.wpunj.edu/~newpol/issue21/leonar21.htm> (Accessed 14 February 2006).

roles within *Emile* where 'woman rules man by submitting to his will and knowing how to make him will what she needs to submit to… in this way, Emile's freedom is preserved without Sophie's will being denied'.[15] Seen in this light, sexual politics may also be interpreted as a means for those conscious of their subordinate position to obtain some power.

The debate surrounding the nature and intent of Sophie's inclusion in *Emile* stems from the various interpretations of Rousseau's use of sexual politics in the Emile-Sophie relationship. Emile is ostensibly taught to be 'independent' and knowledgeable about 'practical' matters because he is ultimately destined to be a citizen. Sophie is seemingly taught to be 'dependent', a good household manager and coquette because nature intended her to be a wife and mother. Rousseau advocates that Sophie use her sexuality to manipulate and teach Emile to be virtuous, honourable and moral. Sophie is to manipulate Emile without his knowledge so as to preserve his belief in his male strength and superiority. Scholars are divided on purpose of Sophie's presence and education due to their different interpretations of Rousseau's contradictory views of women and human sexuality. As Rousseau both celebrates and reviles 'women' and human sexuality, discussions on the intent of *Emile*'s sexuality politics are contentious.

The matter of sexual politics appears, for the most part, towards the end of Book IV and throughout Book V. Sexual education and by extension, sexual politics, is 'the most necessary art for a man and a citizen' for it is 'knowing how to live with his fellows' (Em IV, 328). Because Emile is to be 'a member of society' and he 'is not made to remain always solitary', his nascent passion and sexuality must be given direction lest

[15] Allan Bloom, 'Introduction', in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, New York, Basic Books, 1979 p. 25

'his passions…lead him astray' (Em IV, 327). Armed with the 'purpose' of finding a perfect mate for Emile, the young man enters the civil state. Therefore, with the search for Sophie, Rousseau outlines the beginning of the end of Emile's education. In this search for Sophie, we learn of Sophie's education and of what many commentators hold to be Rousseau's ideal female. Only when Emile has found Sophie and becomes subject to her governance (Em V, 479) will he be fit to be the ideal citizen. In addition, Sophie's education, her meeting and her eventual marriage to Emile completes his education. Their union and Emile's quest to find her is central to the sexual politics of *Emile*.

Organisation of Thesis

The controversy in the education systems advocated in *Emile* arises from the distinctively different educations and of Emile and Sophie. Whereas Emile as a male is brought up to be 'independent' and knowledgeable in 'practical' matters, Sophie is taught to be useful to her husband so that she will be estimable. Hence, critics such as Susan Moller Okin and Sarah Kofman claim that Rousseau is an antifeminist for bringing up male and female children differently.[16] Rousseau's admirers such as Peter Jimack and John Hall, on the other hand, see the novel education of *Emile*'s first four books as generic to all children regardless of gender and advantageous to all, as it allows children to be children and not miniature adults.[17] These differing opinions have engendered several debates as to the intention of Emile and Sophie's educations, especially with regard to the nature of Rousseau's views on women. Whether the commentators see

[16] See Chapter 8 of Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979. Also see Sarah Kofman, 'Rousseau's Phallocratic Ends', *Hypatia*, 3, No. 3, 1988.
[17] See Peter Jimack, *Rousseau: Emile*, London, Grant and Cutler, 1983, and John Hall, *Rousseau: An Introduction to His Political Philosophy*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1973.

Rousseau as an antifeminist or a visionary political education thinker, they are united in their view that Emile and Sophie are the ideal man and woman in the corrupt world. The opposing interpretations of Sophie's education have engendered several debates as to the purpose of her presence in *Emile*.

This dissertation contends that *Emile* is Rousseau's attempt to create the ideal citizen fully equipped to cope with the ills in civil society. *Emile* could also be seen as an attempt to create the ideal state (*la patrie*[18]). He does so through the educations and mutual interactions of the main characters, Emile and Sophie. The different modes of educations recommended to each gender, as well as their purposes, are still sources of controversy, for several questions remain: Why are these types of education recommended? How do they serve to create the ideal citizen? How do they serve to create the ideal state? What are the ideal citizen and ideal state? How is the justice of these creations vindicated?

This chapter introduces *Emile* by outlining its arguments and its implications vis-à-vis Rousseau's previous works. It summaries the chief arguments in the five books of *Emile*, the unfinished sequel, *Emile et Sophie*, and highlights the importance of sexual politics in Emile and Sophie's educations.

Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation examine the role of sexual politics in Emile's and Sophie's educations respectively. Apart from considering the interpretations of Emile's negative education, chapter 2 examines the current attitudes towards Emile's education. There are generally three schools of thought. They generally perceive Emile Emile's education as: (a) little more than an educational manual in childrearing, (b) a

[18] *La patrie* is often translated as the fatherland in English. However, since Rousseau's notion of the fatherland encompasses the country and its administration, I have interpreted *la patrie* as the state.

project of moral philosophy, or (c) a means to create the ideal man. The last set of scholars argue that *Emile* 'attempts to reconcile nature with history, man's selfish nature with the demands of civil society, [and] hence inclination to duty.'[19] The second group believes that Emile's entire education is moral and it is this moral education that protects him from the ills of society.[20]

Chapter 3 considers the views of commentators on Sophie's education and feminist critics of Rousseau. Although these scholars agree that Sophie's education deals with the broader issues of sexual politics in *Emile*, they are spilt in their opinions as to whether Rousseau's project for Sophie is antifeminist or feminist. This controversy over Sophie's education and her role in power relations with Emile arises from Rousseau's complex and ambiguous treatment of women and sexuality in *Emile* and his other works. Given the resurgent belief that human roles ought to continue to be determined by gender, this chapter will also discuss the legacy of the sexual politics advocated in *Emile*.

Chapter 4 seeks to add another dimension to the various interpretations in Emile and Sophie's educations by forwarding the notion that *Emile*'s sexual politics serve to create the ideal citizen and the ideal state. I shall do so by highlighting the role of sexual politics, examining Rousseau's complex and ambiguous views of women and sexuality, and qualifying his apparently contradictory remarks on women's education. Although Rousseau informs us that 'the two words, *fatherland* and *citizen* should be effaced from modern languages' because 'there is no longer fatherland' and 'there can no longer be citizens' with no fatherland (Em I, 40), *Emile* is not about the effacement of these terms. Rather, it seeks to recreate these terms by creating the ideal citizen capable of coping

[19] Allan Bloom, 'The Education of Democratic Man: Emile', in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Harold Bloom, ed., New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 1988, p. 149.
[20] Peter Jimack, *Rousseau: Emile*, London, Grant and Cutler, 1983, p. 20

with modern society and an ideal state (or fatherland) to which the citizen can look up. To do the former, Rousseau has to first create an ideal state, and he does so through the education of Sophie. Sophie and Emile's educations complement each other and complete each other, for there can be no ideal citizen without the ideal fatherland. As *Emile* shows how political education can rescue our natural desires from social corruption seen in the *Second Discourse*, and the political education within it renders it almost a companion piece to the *Social Contract*, I take it to be part of Rousseau's political writings.

Thus the 'rescue of our natural drives from social corruption' seems to provide the initial impetus for Rousseau's outline of the educational projects in *Emile*. However, it soon becomes clear that *Emile* is more than a pedagogical text, for its political intent is made clear when we are told Emile will 'come to know what the duties and the rights of citizens are… what the fatherland is, precisely what it consists in…' (Em V, 466). Given this then, Rousseau speaks of the intent of *Emile*: 'Forced to combat nature or the social institutions [which are corrupt], one must choose between making a man or a citizen, for one cannot make both at the same time' (Em I, 39). Since he must either battle society to create natural man, or battle nature to create a citizen, Rousseau realises that this is a conundrum. While Emile is to be a natural man in society, his status as such may very well mean that he will be neither 'man nor citizen: he will be good neither for himself nor for others' (Em I, 40). Despite this, Rousseau announces, 'if perchance the double object we set for ourselves could be joined in a single one by removing the contradictions of man, a great obstacle to his happiness would be removed' (Em I, 41). This confirms Rousseau's project to make Emile both a man and a citizen. Indeed, as Book V illustrates,

Emile chooses to be a husband and a father, thereby making him both a man and a citizen (Em V, p. 448). In order to 'join' this 'double object' of man and citizen, Rousseau spends the first three books of *Emile* creating a natural man before shaping this natural man into a citizen in books IV and V.

By returning to *Emile* in the spirit of enquiry championed by Rousseau, I contend that Sophie's education completes Emile's by enabling him to be the ideal citizen for existing society. Similarly, I forward the argument that Emile's education complements hers by enabling her to be the personification of the ideal state (*la patrie*). Since Rousseau says 'he cares little if men take [*Emile*] to be a novel', this is how I have read the text:

(1) The ideal state (or fatherland) is created because there is no longer a fatherland or state. Rousseau does so through Sophie and her education. The fatherland/state (*la patrie*) needs to have the ideal citizen administering it, for the entity cannot administer itself.

(2) The ideal citizen is created to protect and value his ideal fatherland/state. Rousseau does this by attending to all aspects of Emile's education. As Emile is brought up as a 'natural man', he must be 'readied' for civil society with his incorruptibility intact. His sexual education occurs in Book V, where he meets and marries Sophie, thus coming into the 'age of wisdom'. This sexual education educates Emile to be a civil man and therefore an ideal citizen for existing society.

(3) The ideal citizen is created by the careful ministrations and guidance of his tutor (*le gouverneur*) who is in actuality not very different from Rousseau's lawgiver in the *Social Contract*.

(4) The ideal citizen has to be constantly governed, first by the tutor/lawgiver, then by the female/ideal state if he is to remain incorruptible, virtuous and good. The ideal citizen is one who is virtuous enough to cope with modern corrupt society without falling prey to its temptations. The ideal fatherland/state is one that makes her citizens want to be virtuous citizens, thereby protecting them from the harms of modern civil society.

(5) The ideal fatherland/state has to be managed with and on the advice of the lawgiver, and by extension, Emile's treatment of Sophie is dependent on his tutor's instructions to both him and his wife.

Chapter 5 concludes the discussion on the intent of Emile and Sophie's education by summing up the role of sexual politics in *Emile*. While I realise that the examination of Emile and Sophie's educations yield only general conclusions, they are crucial nonetheless in advancing the view that *Emile*'s sexual politics attempts to produce the ideal citizen in Emile and the ideal state in Sophie.

Chapter 2. Emile's Education Considered

"…but for now let us begin by making him humane. That, above all, is what is important for us."

Rousseau, *Emile* I, p. 224

Many scholars hold *Emile* to be 'a strange amalgam of pedagogical treatise and novel'[21] because it describes the best way to raise a child (Emile) alongside a narrative of his life and experiences. Hence, commentators are divided as to the interpretations of these two aspects of Emile's education.

Uncertain as to how to reconcile these features, commentators are split into three schools of thought: (1) Emile's education is a detailed pedagogical treatise dependent on the principles of negative education,[22] (2) Emile's education is a project of moral philosophy,[23] and (3) Emile's education is Rousseau's attempt to create the ideal man in our existing society.[24] These commentators' interpretations of Emile's education are determined by their views of Emile's tutor and his role in his charge's education. Commentators who regard Emile's education as a pedagogical exercise in childrearing look on the tutor as a visionary educator who allowed children to be children. Commentators perceiving Emile's education as a way to create the ideal man see the tutor as a god-like figure carefully regulating all aspects of his pupil's life.

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[21] Timothy O'Hagan, *Rousseau*, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 61. Also see Peter D. Jimack, 'La genèse et la rédaction de l'Emile de J.-J. Rousseau' in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 13, Geneva, Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1960.

[22] See S. Chester Parker, 'Our Inherited Practice in Elementary Schools [Continued]: Rousseau in relation to Contemporary Practice', *The Elementary School Teacher*, 10, 5, January 1910, and Martin Meyerson, 'Toward a "Nouveau Emile",' *Oxford Review of Education*, 5, 3, The School and Its Future in Western Societies, 1979

[23] See Patrick Coleman, 'Characterising Rousseau's Emile', *MLN*, 92, 4, French issue, May 1977, and Peter Jimack, *Rousseau: Emile*, London, Grant and Cutler, 1983.

[24] See Allan Bloom, 'The Education of Democratic Man: Emile', in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Harold Bloom, ed., New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 1988, and Geraint Parry, 'Emile: Learning to be Men, Women, and Citizens', in *Cambridge Companion to* Rousseau, Patrick Riley, ed., Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2001

Emile's Education as Pedagogical Project

S. Chester Parker, F. C. Green and Nancy Yusof regard *Emile* as a pedagogical project on childrearing because 'activities appropriate to each age of childhood is reiterated throughout the book', allowing children to be brought up 'free' according to nature.[25] The fact that Rousseau's scathing criticisms of the 'prevailing practice of parental neglect of children' were issued with 'appeals for reform embodied in *Emile*' that were 'successful in modifying the prevailing and subsequent practice of childcare' demonstrates that it is an educational project ensuring 'parents found time to devote to their children'.[26]

Emile's educational regimen is regarded as radical because it deviated from the customs of the time where parents were aloof and children were to be like miniature adults. Instead of teaching children to behave like adults with proper restraint, to speak only when spoken to, to be circumspect, to not indulge in games and such, Rousseau's negative education advocates the absence of constraint and allowance of free play in the child's impulses.[27] Indeed, Rousseau goes so far as to advocate, '…let him fall a hundred times a day. So much the better. That way he will learn how to get up sooner. The well-being of freedom makes up for many wounds' (Em II, 78). Emile is ostensibly not forced to do anything that he does not wish to do. He eats when he is hungry and sleeps when he is tired. He learns from all that happens to him in his life and his games. He is fully allowed to enjoy all his games, his sweets and so on. If he falls sick from eating too many

[25] Parker, 'Rousseau in relation to Contemporary Practice', pp. 231-232.
[26] Ibid., p. 229, and Hippolyte A. Taine, *The Origins of Contemporary France: The Ancient Regime*, Montana, Kessinger Publishing, 2004, p. 273.
[27] Josué V. Harari, 'Therapeutic Pedagogy: Rousseau's Emile', MLN, 97, 4, May 1982, p. 792, and Rebecca Kukla, 'Making and Masking Human Nature: Rousseau's Aesthetics of Education', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 29, 3, October 1998, p. 237

sweets, it is a valuable lesson on the ills of over-indulgence. If he falls down while playing a boisterous game, he learns that running at too quick a speed makes him careless and more prone to injuries. On no account is anyone to console him or fuss over him when he is hurt. The tutor claims, 'It seems that children are little and weak only in order that they may get these important lessons without danger. If the child falls down, he will not break his leg; if he hits himself with a stick, he will not break his arm; if he grabs a knife, he will hardly tighten his grip and will not cut himself very deeply. I do not know of a child at liberty who was ever seen to kill, cripple, or do himself any considerable harm unless he was carelessly exposed on high places or alone near fire, or dangerous instruments were left in his reach.' (Em II, 78)

This negative education serves Emile by 'securing the heart from vice and the mind from error' (Em II, 93). It teaches the child that 'harm… is a necessity he must endure' for in 'bearing slight pains without terror, one gradually learns to bear great pains' (Em II, 77-78). Negative education involves 'never letting anything but correct and clear ideas enter his brain' (Em III, p. 171). Thus, through his games, Emile discovers the practical applications of the objects in nature for himself and his passions.[28] In so doing, Emile gains prudential reason and is kept from the corrupting influences of narrowly calculative and generalised self-critical rationality.[29] The principles and effects of negative education were lauded by nineteenth century educationists like Basedow, Pestalozzi, Froebel and Montessori for 'open[ing] a new era in education'.[30] Ivan Illich

[28] Heather E. Wallace, *Sophie: Women's Education according to Rousseau and Wollstonecraft*. Online. Available HTTP: <http://georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/english016/franken/sophie.txt> (Accessed 14 February 2006).
[29] Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 'Rousseau's Therapeutic Experiments', *Philosophy*, 66, 1997, p. 420
[30] F. C. Green, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Critical Study of His Life and Writings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1955, pp. 263-264.

praises Rousseau's method of returning education to the family so that children can be educated in activities that reveal to them the tasks and experiences of everyday life so that they will not grow up 'rigid' and 'bureaucratized'.[31] To Illich, the nature of Rousseau's negative education caters to the individual's talents so that (s)he would not be put off by formal and standardised tests. This negative education is also thought to be radical because Emile is 'brought up in isolation from society'.[32] Yusof exhibits this mindset as she says Emile is 'a child cut off from all society'.[33]

While negative education ostensibly does not force Emile to do anything that he does not wish to do, this is only half of Rousseau's precept. Rousseau continues this dictum by informing us that members of the adult community (the tutor and the other bystanders recruited to play a role in Emile's education) must oversee Emile's development for an extended period of time. In other words, they must subtly direct his education without him knowing it. This shows that Emile is not isolated from society. This point is often forgotten by the scholars of this school of thought. They do not see that Rousseau's full formula is this: while the child must always do what he wants to do, he should want to do only what the tutor wants him to do. Despite being a disciple of nature and ostensibly allowed to do as he chooses, Emile is constantly restricted by Rousseau's instructions of 'a child *should be* allowed' or 'ideas which must be given him', 'arrange it so'. The purpose of this is to:

> Let *him* always believe he is the master, and let it always be *you* who are. There is *no subjection so perfect as that which keeps the appearance*

[31] See Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*, New York, Harrow Books, 1970, quoted in Martin Meyerson, 'Toward a Nouveau Emile', *Oxford Review of Education*, 5, 3, 1979, p. 259.
[32] Parker, *Rousseau in Relation to Contemporary Practice*, p. 229.
[33] Nancy Yusof, 'Savage or Solitary?: The Wild Child and Rousseau's Man of Nature', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 62, 2, 2001, p. 246.

> *of freedom*. Thus the will itself is made captive. The poor child who knows nothing, who can do nothing, who has no learning, is he not at your mercy? Do you not dispose, with respect to him, of everything which surrounds him? Are you not the master of affecting him as you please? Are not *his labours, his games, his pleasures, his pain, all in your hands without his knowing* it? Doubtless he ought to do what he wants; *but he ought to want only what you want to do*. He *ought not to make a step without your having foreseen it; he ought not open his mouth without your knowing what he is going to say*.
>
> (Em II, 120, my emphasis)

In light of this form of education, it would be inaccurate to say that Emile's education is a purely natural and free one. However much Emile is allowed to live like Robinson Crusoe and be dependent only on things in nature and himself, the truth is – he is very much subjected to the will of his tutor so much so that he is dependent on him. The tutor is not a mediator between nature and Emile because he stage-manages every aspect of Emile's life. Josué Harari rightly points out this absence of constraint and free play 'takes place within the precise limits of the pedagogical field always defined by the pedagogue, and *by him alone*.'[34] Thus, Rousseau traps Emile in a system where his freedom of choice is only an illusion because the tutor produces a series of situations that Emile perceives as a necessary state of affairs in which he has the initiative.[35] Rousseau presents natural necessity (which he contrives through several accidents) in palpable form to Emile so that he will live according to nature prior to understanding it. This careful arrangement of

[34] Harari, *Therapeutic Pedagogy*, p. 792
[35] Ibid.

'everything around' Emile causes his will to be a captive to the tutor because he is subjected to the 'appearance of his freedom'. From his constant subjection to the tutor's will in all these 'accidents surrounding him', Emile will come to learn that he *cannot* exist alone. Furthermore, these accidents and his consequent interactions with the people in them demonstrate that Emile is far from being a child 'cut off from society'.

Emile's education cannot be said to be in accordance to the principles of freedom because Rousseau carefully regulates his education to 'save' him from the impact of society without completely liberating him from it. Emile's education from infancy is meant to mould him into a man. In such an education, 'the laws of liberty' cannot be enforced because Emile has to be constantly protected from the force of parents', servants', and friends' values, which are antithetical to the acquisition of virtue.[36] Therefore, negative education is not an effortless endeavour. It is called negative education not because the child is not educated according to the norms of the day, but because it prevents the imposition of an artificial, society devised and socially oriented self on Emile.[37] Emile's will is not completely his own because it is subject to the tutor's, so that he can learn for himself. Rousseau's authority over Emile in negative education through the 'stratagems and deceits' and 'controlling events' (Em II, 84-85) so as to ensure his docility when he approaches adulthood. At the cusp of adulthood at the end of Book IV, Emile can only enter society when his will is firmly under the tutor's control (Em 291-2, 295, 297-300) thus ensuring that he will not be corrupted by society. By this time, Emile is fully cognisant of the tutor's authority over him and he welcomes it, for he claims, 'as long as I live I shall need you… resume your authority, I place it in your

[36] Judith N. Shklar, 'Rousseau's Images of Authority', in *Cambridge Companion to Rousseau*, Patrick Riley, ed., Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 172
[37] Ibid., p. 173

hands with my own free will' (Em V, 480). Rousseau's will is indeed essential to Emile for despite his education, he cannot live without someone managing every aspect of his life. In the unpublished and incomplete sequel to *Emile*, *Emile et Sophie ou Les Solitaires*, Emile finds his life falling apart after the tutor departs. As he rejects Sophie's authority and her objections to his plan to take his family to Paris after the death of their daughter and Sophie's parents, he succumbs to the corruptions of the city, neglects Sophie as he cannot govern himself and as an upshot, his life, marriage and happiness fall apart. Thus, without the tutor and Sophie governing the minutiae of his life, Emile fails as a man, for he is not independent and autonomous after all. This inability to cope with the corruptions existent in society highlight Rousseau's importance as tutor and reveal that Emile's education and so-called self-determination is inadequate. Therefore, negative education cannot be said to be the foundation stone to a child's well-adjustment to society as many educational theorists claim. Also, negative education is entirely dependent on the tutor; if the tutor does not control all events, his charge may turn out to be worse than Emile in *Emile et Sophie*. Negative education is an unequal relationship between tutor and charge precisely because it is so labour intensive.[38] The tutor has to judge and handle Emile's different needs, abilities, and reactions in various different situations.

Furthermore, through the tutor's carefully contrived accidents where Emile is expected to learn something, he interacts with others. This demonstrates that Emile is far from being a child 'brought up in isolation from society'.[39] Emile is not meant to live alone. At no point in *Emile* did Rousseau advocate 'anti-social elements in his doctrine'. It is very clearly stated that Emile's education seeks to enable him to live in society. His

[38] Meyerson, *Toward a 'Nouveau Emile'*, p. 261.
[39] Quoted from Parker, *Rousseau in relation to Contemporary Practice*, p. 230, and Yusof, *Savage or Solitary?*, p. 246.

education teaches him 'how to live with himself, and in addition, how to earn his bread' (Em IV, p. 249). If Emile were not intended to live in society, he would simply live alone in the woods without finding it necessary to learn a trade. The tutor insists that learning a trade is part of Emile's education in how to be a useful and productive member of society.

Moreover, negative education is not only an aspect of Emile's education, it is also the foundation. The act of 'securing the heart from vice and the mind from error' (Em II, 93) will become part of the learning of the love for 'virtue' and 'truth' in Emile's moral and sexual educations in Books IV and Book V respectively. His moral education in Book IV and his previous negative education teach him to know himself, his limitations and his abilities so that he can live in the world in a well-adjusted manner without feeling envious of others. The 'accidents' engineered by Emile's tutor in his negative education and his sexual education of Book V teach him 'the most necessary art for a man and a citizen... [is] knowing how to live with his fellows' (Em IV, 328). Through his interactions with others in the tutor's staged 'accidents', negative education lays the foundation in teaching Emile that he cannot exist alone and that he 'needs a mistress'.[40] In learning about the self first, Emile learns to 'live with the world' for he is able to look within himself to find what is common to all. After all, all human beings have the same concerns of personal safety, love for family and so on. *Emile* deprecates the social, the sophisticated and the urban and the 'civilised' by rejecting the accepted forms of learning from society, books and traditions because they are man-made.[41] Instead, *Emile* stresses

[40] Joel Schwartz, *Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1985, pp. 79-81.
[41] G. H. Bantock, 'Emile' Reconsidered, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, November 1953, p. 24.

that learning from a carefully selected series of observations from animal life and rustic life. So doing would allow man to follow some quintessential conception of manhood beneath all the forms of conventional existence and accept the disciplines of 'things' so much so that he 'find[s] in practical unity the true criterion of learning, to prefer the less sophisticated form of human activity to the more'.[42]

Emile's Education as Moral Philosophy Tract

Timothy O'Hagan, Patrick Coleman and Peter Jimack believe Emile's education to be 'a treatise of moral philosophy' where education is used to 'communicate a positive system of moral development' to 'balance the decline of human nature told in the *Second Discourse*.'[43] Like many modern scholars, Coleman and Jimack are of the mind that there is an underlying systematicity to Emile in spite of its hybrid form of 'part pedagogical treatise' and 'part novel'. This systematicity is brought across through their belief that Rousseau meant to write Emile as a treatise of moral philosophy.[44] They feel that *Emile* addresses these problems outlined in the *Second Discourse* by attempting to bridge the immense distance between the pure state of nature (which may never have existed and which may never exist) and civil society (which is corrupt). Rousseau, they claim, made it possible for the 'pure heart to rescue our natural drives from social corruption' in Emile's education.[45] They point out that Emile's education is, for Rousseau, 'the best kind of education in the existing state of society' because his education gathers and

[42] Ibid., p. 25.
[43] See Peter D. Jimack, 'La genèse et la rédaction de l'Emile de J.-J. Rousseau' in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 13, Geneva, Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1960; P. D. Jimack, 'Introduction' in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans., Barbara Foxley, London, Everyman, 1910; and Patrick Coleman, 'Characterising Rousseau's Emile', *MLN*, Vol. 92, No. 4, French issue, May 1977, p. 766.
[44] Coleman, Characterising Rousseau's Emile, pp. 766-767.
[45] O'Hagan, *Rousseau*, p. 59.

brings to the fore all his 'pureness of heart' to create a natural man equipped to deal with others in an already corrupted society'.[46] They are struck by 'Rousseau's explicit condemnation of the use of examples of moral education' and the fact that 'the work contain[ing] this assertion is identified with the name of an imaginary pupil whose action seeks to illustrate the maxims of morality.'[47]

Jimack, Coleman and O'Hagan are right to stress that *Emile* seeks to illustrate 'how corruption can be postponed or even prevented, by a meticulous educational formation.'[48] However, they do not go far enough in their assessment of Emile's education. Moral education is not only used to curb this corruption of natural man in society; it teaches Emile to love and value the things he has learnt in this moral education precisely because he will be inseparable from society, and by extension, politics. Rousseau's moral philosophy is that 'man is naturally good, and that it is from these institutions [modern civil society, the arts and sciences] alone that men become wicked.'[49] This unites all his major works through *Emile*, but it is not the only theme. His moral philosophy is linked to his political philosophy, which brings to light the necessity of a contract where everyone in society submits to the inalienable authority of the general will. This political philosophy also hints at other contracts on smaller scales, such as that between tutor and student, husband and wife, friend and friend; it is not unique to the relationship between the people and the government or state. All these relationships involve people being subjected willingly to an authority or will greater than theirs. Emile

[46] Peter Jimack, *Rousseau: Emile*, London, Grant and Cutler, 1983, p. 20
[47] Coleman, *Characterising Rousseau's Emile*, pp. 765-766.
[48] O'Hagan, *Rousseau*, p. 59.
[49] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Letter to Malesherbes, 12 January 1762', in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions and Correspondence, including the Letters to Malesherbes*, The Collected Writings of Rousseau, Vol. 5, Christopher Kelly, trans., Christopher Kelley, Roger D. Masters and Peter G. Stillman, eds., Hanover and London, University Press of New England, 1995, p. 575.

is made aware of that and willingly gives up his own will twice to the tutor: first, in Book IV, 'Take back the authority you want to give up at the very moment that it is most important for me that you retain it. You had this authority up to this time only due to my weakness; now you shall have it due to my will' (Em IV, 325); and second, at the very end of Book V, 'As long as I live, I shall need you. I need you more than ever now that my functions as a man begin… Guide me' (Em V, 480).

In both these accounts, Emile acknowledges the tutor's will is stronger than his. He acknowledges he needs his tutor's 'governance'. His tutor's guidance leads him into society so that he finally meets Sophie and becomes a man. With the onset of his marriage, Emile is made all the more accountable to society as he is expected to contribute to it as a man and a citizen. As Emile is dependent on others guiding his will and steering him clear of corruption, the tutor surrenders his authority to Sophie, thereby giving her the authority to contract with Emile and make him accountable to her, 'Here my long task ends, and another's begins… I abdicate the authority you confided to me, and Sophie is your governor from now on' (Em V, 479). Since Emile is now fully cognisant of the reasons why he must subject his will to higher authority for the sake of the good of the whole, he will willingly permit it. However, because he chooses not to heed this authority (as he chooses to override Sophie's objections in *Emile et Sophie*), he will end up tearing apart his life, marriage and happiness.

It will be also noticed that Coleman and Jimack gloss over Sophie's presence in *Emile*, as they feel she ought to be studied on her own. This is because they regard her education as having little bearing on Emile's. At best, they acknowledge that the quest for

Sophie is the quest for wisdom.[50] As much as I agree that Sophie is the personification of wisdom and Emile's possession of her would be tantamount to his possession of wisdom, I follow Allan Bloom's reading that her presence 'completes him without alienating him'.[51] Her presence does more than provide a springboard for Emile's morality and values to take shape; she teaches him to care for others and not only himself; she gives him new reason to be true to himself. Her presence and Emile's love for her, as well as the wisdom and virtues she embodies, enable him to come to an attachment to civil society and thus become a worthy and productive man in it.

Emile's Education as Rousseau's Attempt to create an Ideal Man

The third group of scholars are not as parochial in their reading of Emile as the commentators who read it as a purely pedagogical or moral philosophy text. They believe that Emile's education is directed towards the creation of the golden mean of man mentioned in the *Second Discourse*.[52] Mary Nichols, Allan Bloom, and Geraint Parry maintain that *Emile* teaches Emile 'to be a man in civil society, despite civil society'[53] and 'alters his constitution for the purpose of strengthening it'.[54] They hold that Emile's education moulds him into a philosopher-king-like being (as seen in Plato's *Republic*) so

[50] Coleman, *Characterising Rousseau's Emile*, p. 777.
[51] Allan Bloom, 'The Education of Democratic Man: Emile', in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Harold Bloom, ed., New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 1988, p. 170.
[52] This is described as 'The happiest and most durable epoch' because 'this state was the best for man… the human race was made to remain it in always.' Cf. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Second Discourse', in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses*, Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters, trans., Roger D. Masters, ed., New York, St Martin's Press, 1964, pp. 150-151.
[53] Geraint Parry, 'Emile: Learning to be Men, Women, and Citizens', in *Cambridge Companion to* Rousseau, Patrick Riley, ed., Cambridge , UK, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 250.
[54] Mary P. Nichols, 'Rousseau's Novel Education in the *Emile*', *Political Theory*, Vol. 13, No. 4, Special Issue – Rousseau – Manners and Feeling, November 1985, p. 179.

that he will have moral responsibility to country, family, friendship and honour.[55] This conclusion is drawn from their reading of *Emile* as a whole and not just his negative education. While these scholars categorise *Emile* as a political work, they fall short of calling *Emile*'s central project a means of creating the ideal citizen and the ideal state.

Although there are many parallels between Emile's education and that of the *Republic*'s guardians, Rousseau does not inform us that Emile is to be a philosopher-king-like being. While I acknowledge that Emile's education may be compared to that of Plato's guardians, I feel that Bloom and Parry are stretching the parallels in their comparisons of *Emile* to *The Republic*. Rousseau explicitly states, 'Emile is not a king. No one knows better than we [Emile and the tutor] do how to keep to our place, and no one has less desire to leave it' (Em V, 467). The only similarities between *Emile* and Plato's *Republic* are the theme of dealing with *thymos* (*amour propre* for Rousseau) and the values Emile and the philosopher-rulers acquire and cherish. Emile's education teaches him to value things like honour, virtue, the state, family and friends, as these tasks are 'given to all, and that whoever, loves the good with all his heart and does it with all his power has fulfilled his task' (Em V, 467). Rousseau wants Emile to be aware of the ills of civil society and see them for what they are – a hotbed of power struggles. He has no intention of getting Emile to change the system. He is aware that as an individual, Emile will not be able to do so. Plato's philosopher-rulers are created to reform the polis so as to make it just, Emile is made to be useful and to bow 'to the painful duties [of the state] imposed on him' (Em V, 474). Instead of a virtuous Emile reshaping the corrupt state, Rousseau exhorts that he should 'leave everything to go to fulfil the honourable

[55] Bloom, *The Education of Democratic Man*, pp. 152-155

function of citizen' when 'call[ed] to the service of the fatherland [or the state]' (Em V, 474).

In acknowledging the presence of Sophie in Emile's education, Nichols, Bloom and Parry differ from the commentators who look purely on negative education. They realise that Books IV-V attempt to 'bring Emile into human society and toward moral responsibility'[56] by 'rejecting the ancient heroes' and 'preparing Emile to deal with the hurtful and capricious acts of others' so as to 'understand the necessities that control human society.'[57] To do so, the tutor exerts his will over Emile and teaches him to know 'the tenderness of humanity' and 'the sweetness of commiseration' (Em II, 87). The inculcation of such sentiments goes beyond the self-determination taught in Emile's negative education, for it speaks of his awareness of his tutor's autonomy over him. In short, he realises that inter-human relations always involve some form of power relations. This is a precursor to the sexual politics of Book V where Emile will learn power relations do not always entail one knowing when authority is exacted over one.

However, such an account of his later education diminishes the importance of Sophie's part in Emile's education. In assuming that Sophie is only introduced to the educational equation to teach Emile the 'tenderness of humanity' and 'the sweetness of commiseration', they neglect to see that Sophie's presence in Emile completes his education for she will finally exert her authority over him. Sophie, for all her restrictive education, embodies all the virtues that Emile is to possess in the civil state. In directing Emile's sexual desire to love for Sophie, Rousseau enables Emile to value honour, virtue and family. When these values are firmly instilled in Emile, he will fully come to 'love

[56] Bloom, *The Education of Democratic Man*, p. 153.
[57] Nichols, *Rousseau's Novel Education in the Emile*, pp. 535 and 539

mankind' and acquire 'the most necessary art for man and citizen…. knowing how to live with his fellows' (Em IV, 328). Once he has all these virtues and when Sophie has complete authority over him, then only will he be true to these qualities and 'begin to feel himself in his fellows, to be moved by their complaints, and to suffer their pains' (Em IV, 222). Nichols claims that Sophie is only entered into Emile's educational project as an outlet for his sexual desire. She sees it as a method through which Emile will be taught 'sufferings and hardships' and 'what effort and pain are' as sexual desire (according to her) is an extension of *amour propre*.[58] While Rousseau is extremely concerned with curbing the 'hateful and irascible passions' such as anger, discontent, envy and jealousy in *amour propre* (vanity), it is erroneous to say that Rousseau only did so at the onset of Emile's sexuality when negative education sought to check these 'irascible passions'. Moreover, Sophie does more than instil these values of love honour and wisdom in him. She is to govern him so that he comes to love these virtues.

Prior to the dawning of his sexuality, Emile was taught these virtues throughout Books I-III. However, at that young age, he took them as matter-of-fact lessons teaching him how to use those virtues so that his needs will be satisfied. Emile's discovery of his self-love's (*amour de soi*) ability to transform from a feeling that 'is contented when our true needs are satisfied' to the 'sentiment of *amour propre* which prefers the self to others and demands that others prefer us to themselves' (Em IV, 213-4) occurs early in his life when he tried to grow beans in a garden. The fact that Emile is angered over the uprooted beans he had planted shows that he takes great pride in doing something by and for himself. Due to this pride, he is indignant that his will was thwarted. This anger, as Bloom rightly points out, is due to excessive *amour propre* (excessive vanity leads to

[58] Ibid, p. 542.

anger when vanity is thwarted); and vanity renders one prone to giving oneself self-important airs.[59] Despite that, neither he nor Nichols links this *amour propre* to the episode where the beans were uprooted by Robert, the gardener, to Emile's earlier education on keeping the 'hateful and irascible passions' in check. This part of his education occurs before the introduction of Sophie.

The bean episode teaches Emile that indignation is unjustified if he does not understand the factors underlying the perceived injustice. Sophie's role then is to augment what he learnt in the bean episode. However much Emile had been taught to be like Robinson Crusoe, he can never be a Robinson Crusoe because he must live in civil society. Civil society is full of people with different wills who may not be as generous as Robert, the gardener, is in not seeking restitution and allowing Emile a portion of the garden with 'no conditions'.[60] The mutual indignation of Emile and Robert over their uprooted bean and melon plants demonstrate that power relations will exist so long as human interaction in civil society exists. Power relations are predicated on different individuals' differing wills.

Despite acknowledging that Emile's education is essential to his existence in modern civil society (as opposed to the Spartan ideals Rousseau mentions in *Emile*), commentators such as Parry claim that his education renders him 'autonomous and independent'. He glosses over Sophie's presence and education by saying that her

[59] Bloom, *The Education of Democratic Man*, p. 159

[60] The bean episode occurs in Book II of *Emile*. It is where the tutor arranges for Emile to plant beans to imbue him with a sense of property through exercising his own labour. Emile plants his beans in the space in the garden and is pleased with his results of his labour when the little bean shoots sprouts. However, unbeknownst to him, Robert the gardener had already planted melons in the space where Emile had planted his beans. The gardener is cross with Emile for spoiling his work and Emile is cross for the gardener for doing the same. Emile learns that he should have sought permission before planting the beans. Though Robert is cross at losing his beans, he behaves reasonably and agrees to give Emile a small part of the garden for him to plant beans and promises to share his melons with him.

education makes it possible for her to govern the household with Emile as her husband.[61] In making such a claim, Parry does not see that it is impossible for Emile to be 'autonomous and independent'. This is because Emile has always been destined to live in society, not isolated from it. The Rousseauian conception of 'autonomy' differs from procedural views of autonomy because it is predicated on 'a particular sentiment' allowing one to establish one's identity and to find oneself so as to prescribe a law unto oneself (Em IV, 570, 573, 599). The 'autonomy' Rousseau hopes to instil in Emile has two aspects: Emile is to be *self-governing* in the mode of Plato's Guardians and *self-sufficient* in the manner of Robinson Crusoe.[62] However, the presence of Sophie negates Emile's ability for autonomy because her manipulation him severely limits his self-sufficiency. To be 'autonomous' in the Rousseauian sense is to 'live within oneself' as he says in the *Second Discourse*,[63] and contract no habits (Em I, 282) by living away from society where life is so hollow, deceptive, and hypocritical that it is devoid of real social engagement or interaction.

Emile's education seeks to prepare him for society because it makes him dependent on Sophie. Rousseau does not explicitly state this because he perceives dependence on another as a failure of autonomy. While feminist readers of Rousseau object to Sophie's seemingly complete dependence on Emile, they do so only because Rousseau never outwardly ascribes any autonomy or self-governing trait to her. They neglect to see that Rousseau's evasiveness on Emile's dependence on Sophie is precisely

[61] Parry, *Emile: Learning to be Men, Women, and Citizens*, p. 260.
[62] Jane Roland Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1985, pp. 64-65. My emphasis added.
[63] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men or Second Discourse', in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Discourses and other early political writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.193

due to his blurring of the two aspects of autonomy. Instead of stating outright that Emile is dependent on Sophie, Rousseau chooses instead to hint that dependency on others is part of the human condition by building male dependency on women into his account of Emile's nature where he is 'to have a sense of the true relations of man with respect to the species as well as the individual' (Em IV, 219).[64] Indeed, Rousseau himself admits:

> 'It is man's weakness [i.e. affection and dependence on others] which makes his sociable; it is our common miseries which turn our hearts to humanity; we would owe humanity nothing if we were not men. *Every attachment is a sign of insufficiency*… If some imperfect being could suffice unto himself, what would he enjoy according to us? He would be alone; he would be miserable. I do not conceive how someone who needs nothing can love anything. I do not conceive how someone who loves nothing can be happy.'
>
> (Em IV, 221, my emphasis added)

Thus, Emile's education is fundamentally 'address[ed] to the status of needs, to the human and psychological reality and its welfare.'[65] Such needs and desires arise from Emile's interactions with others. If Emile were truly meant to be 'autonomous and independent', there would not be a need for Sophie in the text. His search for Sophie teaches him 'the most necessary art for a man and a citizen', that is 'knowing how to live with his fellows' (Em IV, 328). Even if readers follow Parry's interpretation that Emile and Sophie's educations are to ensure their good governance of the household together,

[64] Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 165 and Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation*, p. 66

[65] James M. Glass, 'Political Philosophy as Therapy: Rousseau and the Pre-Social Origins of Consciousness', *Political Theory*, 4, 2, May 1976, p. 163.

his education should do so in tandem with Sophie's. This is far from Emile being autonomous and independent.

While Parry concedes that Emile is not a hermit and admits his education ensures that he will be motivated by the public good, he claims Emile is not a citizen as he is too independent. Parry bases his argument on his belief that Rousseau would have attempted to create (as Plato did) a system modelled after the Spartan ideal he so admired. Rousseau knew he could not recreate the ancient systems in the modern world because the world was already corrupted. Instead, Rousseau exhorts Emile to be a good citizen, 'when the state calls you to the service of the fatherland [or state], leave everything to go to fulfil the honourable function of citizen' (Em V, 474). Moreover, in learning to manage his *amour propre*, Emile realises that power relations cannot be avoided in civil society. By looking within himself to find the commonality with which he shares with his fellowmen, Emile calls upon the common good, and in so doing, he becomes a citizen.

Summary and Conclusion

Emile is still regarded as a pedagogical treatise because it continues to be a force in educational thinking.[66] Indeed, commentators still debate over the vision of education therein. While they acknowledge *Emile*'s contributions to modern educational ideas, those who regard *Emile* as a work of moral philosophy maintain that Emile is able to function in existing civil society as he is educated to be morally neutral. On the other hand, commentators viewing Emile's education as Rousseau's attempt to create ideal man are most concerned with how he is to survive in society. Due to these differing

[66] Jimack, *Rousseau*, p. 75.

perspectives, commentators are still rent asunder as to how best to interpret Emile's education.

Any interpretation of Emile's education however would be incomplete without a study on Sophie's education. Indeed, Rousseau scholars are puzzled as to the presence of Sophie and her education in a book ostensibly about Emile. Thus, the next chapter explores Sophie's education and her perceived role in *Emile*.

Chapter 3. Sophie's Education Considered

"To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend to him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time…"

Rousseau, *Emile* V, 365.

Prior to the late 1970s, Sophie was merely considered a manifestation of Rousseau's sentimental need to give Emile a wife.[67] Sophie gained scholarly attention when modern commentators realised her education differed from Emile's. Where his education was innovative for its time, Sophie's was strictly conventional as her 'whole education ought to relate to men' (Em V, 365).[68] This gave rise to the view that her education as antifeminist.[69] However, some scholars believe Sophie's education subversively empowers her within the structures of eighteenth century society,[70] because men's and women's educations of the time reflected their different social functions.[71]

These conflicting interpretations on Sophie's education may be broadly organised into four schools of thought. These four schools of thought are:

(1) Sophie's education is antifeminist because Rousseau casts aside his high regard for liberty and equality, and his awareness of the dangers of oppressive power by relegating women to second-class positions in his society.[72]

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[67] Scholars regarding Sophie in this light include: Roger D. Masters, Stephen Ellenburg, John C. Hall, and Mark S. Claudis.

[68] Peter D. Jimack, 'The Paradox of Sophie and Julie: Contemporary Response to Rousseau's Ideal Wife and Ideal Mother', in *Women and Society in Eighteenth-Century France: Essays in Honour of John Stephenson Spink*, Eva Jacobs, W. H. Barber, Jean H. Bloch, W. W. Leakey, Eileen Le Breton, eds., London, Athlone Press, 1979, p. 152.

[69] Susan Moller Okin, Lynda Lange and Victor Wexler are of this mindset.

[70] Jimack, *The Paradox of Sophie and Julie*, p. 153.

[71] Alison Jagger, 'Political Philosophies of Women's Liberation' in *Feminism and Philosophy*, Mary Vetterling-Braggin, Frederick Elliston and Jane English, eds., Totowa, N. J., Littlefield Adams, 1977, p. 6.

[72] See Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979; Lynda Lange, 'Rousseau and Modern Feminism', *Social Theory and Practice*, 7, 3, 1981, pp. 245-77; Lynda Lange, 'Women and General Will', in *The Sexism of Social and Political Theory*: Women and

(2) Sophie's education and life are circumscribed to ensure Emile's freedom[73] and check her 'naturally political nature' from corrupting him;[74]

(3) Sophie's education empowers her by establishing sexual equality within the confines of the eighteenth century;[75] and

(4) While Sophie's education gives her rights within the conjugal state, it inadequately outlines the mutual dependence of both spouses, for only Sophie's weakness is emphasised, not Emile's.[76]

Antifeminist viewpoint of Sophie's Education

Susan Moller Okin and Lynda Lange claim that Sophie's education exaggerates the sexual differences to subordinate women to men. They aver Rousseau 'rationalised the oppression of women throughout the history of Western world' by emphasising Sophie's dependence on Emile, thus rendering 'the patriarchal nuclear family natural and inevitable'.[77] This is because Rousseau claims 'woman is naturally made to give way to man and to put up even with injustice from him' (Em V, 396). They dub Rousseau's assertion that 'You will never reduce young boys to the same condition [of giving way to

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Reproduction from Plato to Nietzsche, Lorenne Clark and Lynda Lange, eds., Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1979.

[73] See Zillah Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*, New York, Longman, 1981; Ron Christenson, 'The Political Theory of Male Chauvinism: J.-J. Rousseau's Paradigm', *Midwest Quarterly*, 13, pp. 291-99.

[74] See Victor G. Wexler, 'Made for Man's Delight: Rousseau as Antifeminist', *American Historical Review*, 81, pp. 266-91, 1976; Sarah Kofman, 'Rousseau's Phallocratic Ends', *Hypatia*, 13, 3, 1988.

[75] See Joel Schwartz *Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1985; Allan Bloom, 'Rousseau on the Equality of the Sexes', in *Justice and Equality Here and Now*, Frank S. Lucash, ed., Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1986; and Mira Morgenstern, *Rousseau and the Politics of Ambiguity: Self, Culture and Society*, University Park, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.

[76] See Jane Roland Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985; and Linda M. G. Zerilli, *Signifying Woman: Culture and Chaos in Rousseau, Burke and Mill*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1994.

[77] Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, pp. 99 and 120.

another human being], their inner feeling rise in revolt against injustice; nature has not fitted them to put up with it' (Em V, 396) as misogynistic. They condemn Sophie's education as 'a form of refined licentiousness' because she is made 'the slave of love' [78] They also decry Rousseau's claim that women's only natural duties are childrearing and being sexually attractive to her husband. They complain that despite his awareness of the dangers of being constantly made to obey a will that is not one's own, Rousseau subjects women to men's control due to his perception of women's 'limited mental capacities' and 'unlimited sexual desires' (Em V, 364).

While it is true that Rousseau 'define[s] woman' nature… in terms of her function – that is, her sexual and procreative purpose in life',[79] this definition is made with a qualifier – women are seen as procreators because 'nearly half of the children who are born die before they can have others, and the two remaining ones [of the four he recommends women have] are needed to represent the father and mother' (Em V, 362). Infant and child mortality rates were very high in the eighteenth century.[80] In getting Sophie to embrace her procreative powers, Rousseau hopes to keep the population in balance. Sophie's education does not exclusively mould her as a maternal and sexual being; it also prepares her to be a good household manager, fully equipped to govern the family and all in it:

> 'Destined to be mother of a family herself one day, she learns to govern her own household by governing her parents'. She can substitute for the

[78] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Ontario, Broadview Press, 1997, pp. 213-215.
[79] Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, p. 99.
[80] Nancy Senior, 'Aspects of Infant Feeding in Eighteenth-Century France', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 16, 4, Summer 1983, p. 373, and Nicky Hart, 'Beyond Infant Mortality: Gender and Stillbirth in Reproductive Mortality before the Twentieth Century', *Population Studies*, 52, 2, July 1998, p. 226.

> domestics in the performance of their functions, and she always does so gladly. One can *never command well except when one knows how to do the job oneself*.'
>
> (Em V, 394, my emphasis)

It is apparent here that Sophie is not a subject in her household. As a wife and mother, she commands the household for it is her dominion. As she will be the one keeping the accounts and seeing to its day-to-day administration, she must know how to manage her household. Her chief role in the household is 'commanding' those in it, including her husband, Emile.

Okin and Lange compare Emile and Sophie's educations and their different results, and oppose the fact that man is educated to be 'free and active' while woman is educated to be 'constrained and passive'.[81] Emile's education is not all free as the tutor governs every aspect of his life, just as Sophie is constrained in every aspect of her life by her education; where Sophie is forbidden from enjoying herself completely in games due to constant interruptions, Emile faces the same problem when he is roused from sleep frequently and taken to the woods to find his way home. While Sophie is openly constrained by her education, Emile is subtly constrained by his tutor who only allows '…him always [to] believe he is the master, and let it always be you [the tutor] who are' (Em II, 120). Both Emile and Sophie are prevented from enjoying their games and sleep fully because they are constrained and governed by someone else. In claiming that Rousseau denies Sophie sound intellectual capabilities, the commentators forget that Rousseau teaches her about 'our institutions', 'our practices', 'our proprieties' through

[81] Lynda Lange, 'Rousseau and Modern Feminism', in *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Lynda Lange, ed., University Park, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002, p. 27.

'cultivating her mind and her reason' (Em V, 383). She is not expected to bow completely to the opinions of others, for Rousseau acknowledges that she has a mind that is capable of 'comparing the two rules [of what she knows within herself through her conscience] and public opinion' (Em V, 383). She can choose to ignore public opinion when it contradicts her conscience, for it is often 'prejudices' anyway. This is somewhat better than Emile's education where he does not appear to reflect on opinions, he merely ignores them. Sophie, on the other hand, 'weighs' them because she knows they are constructs and 'prejudices'. In so doing, she is able to lead 'Rousseau's recommended life' where 'all knowledge which [we] need in order to live virtuously is supplied by the conscience'.[82]

Furthermore, Rousseau does not see Emile and Sophie's educations to be differing in essentials, for he says Emile and Sophie ought to 'have… the same education [so that] both are equally polite, equally endowed with taste and wit' (Em V, 383). The only difference in their educations is the duties they are shaped to perform (Em V, 382). Like Emile, Sophie is born with a wide range of potentials and capabilities. Her education is not so much constrained due to her 'weaker abilities' or that 'she is meant to obey'; rather, her education prevents traits that Rousseau considers unsuited for a 'commander of the household' to possess. The same can be said of Emile's education as it seeks to prevent the ills inherent in society from corrupting him. Thus, Rousseau uses their educations to mould Emile and Sophie into the roles they will come into, which are, father, husband and citizen for Emile, and wife, mother and state (*la patrie*)[83] for Sophie.

[82] Leo Strauss, 'What is Political Philosophy?', in *What is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies*, Leo Strauss, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1988.
[83] Since Rousseau uses *la patrie* to the country and its administration, I have interpreted *la patrie* as the state rather than fatherland.

Rousseau fears that were both Emile and Sophie's educations not closely supervised, they would be something other than their intended roles – they would become the bourgeois.[84]

Sophie's Education as Manifestation of Rousseau's Fear of Female Power

Victor Wexler and Sarah Kofman believe Rousseau penned Sophie's education to keep women's sexual power from tyrannising men, so much so that men 'would finally be [women's] victims, and would see themselves dragged to death without being able to defend themselves' (Em V, 359).[85] They claim that his fear of women being stronger in 'the control of sexual passion' frightened him into giving the lie to modesty as a trait from nature to prevent the species from perishing.[86] Although Wexler confesses that Sophie's restrictive education is a tribute to her moral and intellectual strength, he complains that Rousseau 'keeps [her] at home' because he 'was afraid to extend her inherent powers to areas where men might remain masters of themselves.'[87]

In his eagerness to explain why Rousseau chose to subjugate women, Wexler does not consider that Emile is at no point 'a master of himself'. While I agree with his analysis that women use 'their indifference to sexual pleasure to govern men',[88] I am opposed to his view that Rousseau subjected Sophie to 'naturally obey' due to his fear of

[84] According to Allan Bloom, Rousseau's conception of the bourgeois is one who 'comes to be when men no longer believe that there is a common good, when the notion of the fatherland decays.' Rousseau also tells us in being neither man nor citizen; one will end up as the bourgeois, and when one is the bourgeois, one is nothing (*Emile* I, p.40). Bloom informs us that the Rousseauian bourgeois 'is contrasted with natural man, who is whole and simply concerned with himself, and with the citizen, on the other, whose very being consists in his relation to his city, who understands his good to be identical with the common good. The bourgeois distinguishes his own good from common good, but his good requires society, and hence he exploits others while depending on them.' See Allan Bloom, 'The Education of Democratic Man: Emile', in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Harold Bloom, ed., New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 1988, p. 151

[85] Wexler, 'Made for Man's Delight', p. 370; and Sarah Kofman, 'Rousseau's Phallocratic Ends', in *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Lynda Lange, ed., University Park, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, p. 234.

[86] Kofman, 'Rousseau's Phallocratic Ends', p. 235.

[87] Wexler, 'Made for Man's Delight', p. 275

[88] Ibid.

the ‘violence of her feminine charms.’ Rousseau wishes women to know themselves as sexual beings. In educating them as to how men perceive them, he teaches them how they can use this power to inculcate values such as virtue, love, honour and wisdom in men. Sophie’s education is not a means for Emile to remain master of himself. She may be confined to the home, but she governs every aspect of the adult Emile’s life after their marriage for she takes over the tutor’s role as governor. In allowing her to govern Emile and declaring it openly, Rousseau shows he is not afraid of women’s power; rather, he wants Sophie to harness her power for the good of Emile and all within her domain:

> Emile, a man needs advice and guidance throughout his life. …Today, I abdicate the authority you confided in me, and Sophie is your governor from now on.
>
> (Em V, 479)

If Rousseau had feared women’s power, he would not have given her power over Emile. She may be the sex Rousseau claims was made to obey, but she will ensure that the orders she ‘obeys’ are those that she lays down herself without Emile’s knowledge:

> She must have the art to make [men] want to do everything that her sex cannot do by itself and which is necessary or agreeable to it… She must learn to penetrate their sentiments by their words, their actions, their looks, their gestures. She must know how to communicate with them – by her words, her actions, her looks, her gestures – the sentiments that she wishes to communicate without appearing even to dream of it… She will read in men’s hearts better than they do.
>
> (Em V, 387)

This shows that Sophie is anything but a passive player in her relationship with Emile. She actively shapes him and gets him to love the virtues she has (and which he ought to learn) by inspiring him and inflaming his passions. She appears to be a figure almost like the lawgiver of Rousseau's *Social Contract* who does not hold overt power, has the ability to see through others, to discern what is in their hearts, and the ability to transform their hearts to deception for she hides her true intentions of ruling.[89] Hence, using her sexuality, she excites Emile's passions and covertly transmutes his heart through opinion without him knowing it so as to transform him from 'a perfect and solitary whole into part of a larger whole from which that individual would as it were receive his life and his being' (SC, 2.7.3).[90]

Jean Elshtain, Paul Thomas, Mary Jacobus, Norman Jacobson and Nannerl Keohane find Sophie's education antifeminist because it is 'metaphysical double talk'.[91] In bringing her up in her 'capacity as a bearer and agent of civilisation', Rousseau stresses her subjective status to render her aware that she is also 'the bearer or agent of corruption.'[92] They note that the reasons for this lies in Rousseau's 'mistrust in women, who are more apt to ruling than men' results in this attempt to shut Sophie up with ignorance; thus the natural perfect woman par excellence, Sophie, 'is not allowed to

[89] Ingrid Makus, "The Politics of 'Feminine Concealment' and 'Masculine Openness' in Rousseau," in *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Lynda Lange, ed., University Park, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002, p. 201. See also Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The Social Contract," in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1997, Book 2, chapter 7.
[90] Makus, *Ibid.*, p. 202. Also see Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book II, chapter 7, paragraph 3, p. 69.
[91] Norman Jacobson, *Pride and Solace: The Functions and Limits of Political Theory*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978, p. 107; Mary Jacobus, *Romanticism, Writing, and Sexual Difference*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 242.
[92] Jacobson, *Pride and Solace*, p. 107; and Paul Thomas, 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sexist?', *Feminist Studies*, 17, 2, Constructing Gender Difference: The French Tradition, Summer 1991, p. 212.

speak in the always-to-be-trusted voice of her original nature.'[93] As women are the instruments of men's degeneration as well as 'the plain tongue of common sense',[94] they must be kept subservient to men to ensure men's freedom from their corrupting influences. Hence, 'in fitting Sophie for her fate [as wife and mother and appendage to Emile], Rousseau employs a panoply of artifices indistinguishable from those who excoriated in the *Second Discourse*: dissimulation, dependence, reliance on the opinions of others as a guide for behaviour and as a source for one's very own sense of self.'[95] So doing, these feminists claim, will successively enable Emile to be a citizen as well as a natural and independent man.[96]

In their critique of Sophie's education vis-à-vis Emile's, these commentators are overly concerned with Rousseau's perceived traits of women and insufficiently concerned with his reconciliation of their dual and opposite roles as instruments of male corruption and agents of civilisation. Rousseau claims that women *have the potential to be the corrupters of men* just as they have the potential to be the inculcators of good values in men. Sophie only *seems* subservient to man because without his knowing it, she is educated to be Emile's agent of socialisation and the means through which he will become a citizen. While Okin and Judith Shklar read *Emile* as Rousseau's 'model of making a man' as well as 'citizen', they arrive at this understanding through analysing only Emile's education. Emile's education prior to introduction of Sophie only *ostensibly* makes him a natural man, not a man fully equipped to live in existing society, and

[93] Jean Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 164.
[94] Jacobson, *Pride and Solace*, p. 107.
[95] Nannerl O. Keohane, "'But for Her Sex…?': The Domestication of Sophie", *University of Ottawa Quarterly*, 49, Nos. 3-4, 1979, p. 397.
[96] Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, p. 168; and Judith Shklar, *Man and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Political Theory*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1969. pp. 147-148.

certainly not a citizen. He must learn from Sophie 'what must be done' before he can understand what being a citizen entails. Sophie's education gives her the means to reform Emile's mores so that he comes to consider both 'what living with his fellows entail' and 'what government, laws and fatherland are' (Em V, 448). Her education embodies her with beauty, wisdom, justice and virtue, traits which she must attempt to impart to Emile if he is to become a citizen. From being drawn to Sophie's charms and entering into a physical relationship with her, Emile will come to consider both 'himself in his physical relations with other beings' and 'his moral relations with other men' while she uses her teaching and guidance to steer him clear from the corruptions of society (Em V, 455).

Sophie's education only makes her *appear* the subservient wife; in actuality, she is educated to rule over Emile to take the tutor's place when he leaves upon their marriage. If Rousseau were indeed as frightened of female power as these critics claim, then he would not have entrusted Sophie with the task of supervising, guiding and educating Emile as he, the tutor, had done through Emile's life. In commending the adult Emile to her care and authority, Rousseau is acknowledging her power and her natural propensity to govern men.[97]

Sophie's Education as Instrument of Female Empowerment

Despite the general view that Rousseau's education for Sophie is antifeminist, Allan Bloom, Nancy Senior, Mira Morgenstern, and Helen Evans Misenheimer argue that any judgement of Sophie's education must be examined in the context of its time. They

[97] See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Second Discourse', in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses*, edited with introduction and notes by Roger D. Masters, Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters, trans., New York, St Martin's Press, 1964, p. 89.

claim Sophie's education demonstrates that 'Rousseau was a man of his century.'[98] Yet in giving her the education that he did, Rousseau 'placed less emphasis on the subordination of women to men and saw Sophie more in her future social and familial role as educator and head of a household',[99] thereby 'insert[ing] women into her place in educational evolution at a moment when social revolution will uniquely support her cause as fellow head of the house.'[100] In painting her as the 'weaker sex', Rousseau 'apotheosizes woman and her societal posture to the point of earthly sainthood',[101] for he believes Sophie's gentleness and modesty will enable her to transmit the virtues that Emile must have before he can be a citizen; thus he has Sophie inflame Emile's desires so that he will acquire 'an equilibrium between his abilities and his desires' and 'learn compassion'.[102]

Lori Marso goes further in her interpretation of Sophie's education, when she considers Rousseau's method of allowing Sophie to have some power in the private sphere subversively, for she says whereas Emile is taught to isolate his experiences and place them into others as common, Sophie is taught to perceive people's subtle gestures.[103] Precisely because Sophie is educated to observe and interpret these subtle gestures, it is she, not Emile, who will be alerted to possible discord; and because she is capable of looking at others as themselves (in contrast to Emile, who looks *in* himself to

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[98] Misenheimer, *Rousseau and the Education of Women*, pp. 9-10; also see Mary J. Senior, 'Sophie and the State of Nature,' *French Forum*, 2, 2, May 1977, pp. 134-46.
[99] Jimack, The Paradox of Sophie and Julie, p. 154.
[100] Misenheimer, *Rousseau and the Education of Women*, p. 5. In 18th century France, it was a common theme in writings on women's education to advocate giving the female more of a say in the running of the household in eighteenth-century society. Breast-feeding for the children was also advocated, as was caring for one's own children. This form of education sought to women to get more involved in the lives of their family. It was novel because most families then hired wet nurses to feed and care for their children and women had no say in their children's lives.
[101] Ibid., pp. 5-6. Also see Else Wiestad, 'Empowerment Inside Patriarchy: Rousseau and the Masculine Construction of Femininity', in *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Lynda Lange, ed., University Park, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002, p. 177.
[102] Morgenstern, *Rousseau and the Politics of Ambiguity*, pp. 72-73.
[103] Lori J. Marso, 'Rousseau's Subversive Women' in *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Lynda Lange, ed., University Park, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002, p. 250.

understand others), she is able to avoid conflict. These commentators argue that since Sophie's education tends to this end, where she is the arbiter of justice in the confines of Eighteenth-century French society, Rousseau is empowering her in the best and most realistic way he knows how – subversively, so as to avoid an outcry should he give women power directly.

I contend that Rousseau was perfectly aware that *Emile* would engender a great deal of controversy and debate, as evinced in his claim that he did not care if readers took it as a novel. He constantly reminds the reader his awareness of the criticisms that might be levelled against him:

> Reader, I am well aware that no matter what I do, you and I will never see my Emile with the same features…. You will say, "This dreamer always pursues his chimera. In giving us a pupil of his making, he not only forms him, he creates him, he pulls him out of his brain; and though he believes he is always following nature, he diverges from it at every instant."
>
> (Em IV, 315)

Hence, he knew that in refusing to be limited by what was generally considered practical for the standards of the eighteenth century, he would be courting debate. Given this then and the charges of misogyny levelled against Sophie's education by eighteenth-century women writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Marie-Jeanne Roland, it seems clear Emile's education was not the only source of controversy of *Emile*.

Sophie's education is more than a means of empowering her in the confines of eighteenth-century society, for Rousseau acknowledges a common psychology fact that

women will have to educate men by using their sexuality to exploit men's desires without bruising their male egos. As this was a time when women were still perceived as chattel, and any property or money of her own would be absorbed into the husband's estate on her marriage, sex was a viable weapon for women. While the manipulation of men through female sexuality may appear demeaning and repugnant, it must be acknowledged that 'wives today maintain a fulfilling martial life through careful control of their husbands without their knowing it.'[104]

This notion of women gaining power only when they have met expectations of male scrutiny and appraisal is still existent today. Modern women desirous of proving themselves equal to men while subscribing to the notion that they must be the ideal figures of men's dreams in order to subvert the male-dominated system, actively use their sexuality to direct the power relations between themselves and men. Most females in their late 20s-30s believe that their 'natural sexuality' will win power, affection and respect from the males they marry. Many unmarried women in their 20s-late 30s blame their success in the public sphere for damaging their 'natural feminine wiles' and destroying their chances of ensnaring a husband.[105] Sixty-eight percent of young American women have declared that they would rather 'raise babies, make dinner parties and dress up' than have careers and in so doing, gain their husbands' affection and respect.[106] This view of women's 'natural functions' was also prevalent during the Second World War. Paula Siber, the secretary for women's work in the Nazi Ministry of

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[104] Ian Johnston, *Lecture on Emile, Book V*, text of a lecture in LBST 401, Malaspina University-College, Nanaimo, 1999 Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/introser/rousseau.htm> (Accessed 10 July 2005).

[105] Sarah Bernard, 'Success and the Single Girl', *New York,* 26 April 1999, p. 34.

[106] Erica Jong, 'Are We Having Fun Yet?', *Talk*, October 2004, p. 136; Lisa Belkin, 'The Opt-Out Revolution', *The New York Times Magazine*, 26 October 2003, p. 42-86, and Claudia Willis, 'The Case for Staying Home', *Time*, 22 March 2004, pp. 51-59.

the Interior claims that if 'the young girl is… brought up as a girl, not as an imitation man', she will gain 'economic aid, economic protection and health protection' from men.[107] Frau Siber's words mirror Rousseau's recommendation to Sophie – if she wants to forward her own interests, she must keep Emile happy (Em V, 478-9).

Sophie's education empowers both her and Emile. While Sophie is empowered to govern Emile through her education, her education empowers him to look to the good that is within himself and apply it to those around him. Through his passion for Sophie, Emile learns to tap into his feelings of human solidarity, 'live with his fellows' and realise his place in the socio-political order. He is also taught how to establish the conditions under which he may be comprehended in the scope of a civil body, for he learns 'to live with his fellows' (Em IV, 328). Scholars who disregard Sophie's education claim that Books I-IV teaches Emile to be a man 'equipped with traits and skills that a citizen of the ideal city must have',[108] but it should be borne in mind that he does not become a citizen until he knows Sophie and comes to love the virtues in her; only then will he be ready to take on the mantle of man and citizen. Moreover, Emile is not made a citizen of the ideal city. He is to be the ideal citizen fully equipped to cope with the ills of existing society. Through Sophie, he comes to know the ideal state and acquire the virtues it represents. Thus, Sophie's education empowers him because she has been educated to teach him how to cope with existent civil society.

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[107] Paula Siber, 'Motherhood the Highest Mission of Nazi Women', *The Singapore Free Press*, Saturday, 7 July 1934, p. 4.

[108] See John Plamanatz, 'Ce Qui Ne Signifie Autre Chose Sinon Qu'on Le Force d'Être Libre', in *Hobbes and Rousseau*, Maurice Cranston and R. S. Peters, eds., New York, Anchor Doubleday, 1972, p. 362; Roger D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 42; and J. H. Broome, *Rousseau: A Study of his Thought*, London, Edward Arnold, 1963, chapter 5.

While such an interpretation may be offensive to those who object to Sophie's conscious use of her 'subordinate position' to obtain some power on grounds that Rousseau valorises femininity so as to maintain Emile's position as the patriarch and keep Sophie permanently subordinate, it should be noted that Emile, like Sophie, is *not free to choose* – he cannot choose *not* to live in the 'small fatherland which is the family' as represented by Sophie.[109] Sophie manipulates Emile because she is denied access to the role of citizen; as such, she must teach him to learn and teach him to love so as to acquire economic and political power for herself in her status as *la patrie*. Let us not forget that Emile is equally as 'subordinate' to her – he needs her to tend to his needs, he needs her to love him, he needs her to administer his household, he needs her to give him children, he needs her to teach him how to love them, he needs her to take care of them, he needs her in order to be moral, he needs her to instil these traits in him if he is to possess the necessary attachment to the state and be a good citizen.[110]

Sophie's Education as Inadequate Instrument of Female Empowerment

Of the proponents who read Sophie's education as a way to empower women through their sexuality, Jane Roland Martin and Linda Zerilli feel Rousseau did not do enough to free her from her traditional roles. This is due to his fear that her education

[109] Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation*, p. 48
[110] Ibid., p. 65 and Zillah Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*, New York, Longman, 1981, pp. 64 ff, and Elizabeth Rapaport, 'On the Future of Love: Rousseau and the Radical Feminists', in *Women and Philosophy,* ed., Carol C. Could and Mark W. Wartofsky, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976, p. 195ff.

may not successfully ward off the threat of disorder that she 'naturally' possesses.[111] She is perceived to be 'natural instrument of disorder' because of her 'insatiable' needs and desires (Em V, 364). They accuse Sophie's education of not serving the purpose of preparing citizens because as the head of the household best equipped to educating and nurturing new citizens, she will not be educating the males, only her daughters. They argue that for Rousseau, it is 'the good son, the good husband, and the good father who make the good citizen' (Em V, 363); as such, the family which is 'ruled by Emile but cared for by Sophie' is a proposal for 'differential socialisation for boys and girls' because she will 'expect her daughters rather than her sons, to follow her example.'[112]

Rousseau wrote that Sophie's education is so that she will be Emile's governor (Em V, 479) and by extension, the head of the household because she will offer him 'advice' and 'guidance' for the remainder of his adult life. Seen in this light, Sophie cannot be considered an educator of her daughters *only*, as she is expected to educate Emile who is male. Since she educates Emile on the ways of the citizens (learning to live with his fellows, and obtaining a good grasp of social practices) and the virtues accompanying it, it follows that she should educate her sons in the same fashion. She will imbue all her children with a knowledge and love for beauty, honour, virtue and wisdom. In so doing, her sons will be like Emile, ideal citizens capable of coping with the ills of existing civil society. Likewise, her daughters will end up like her – transmitters of virtue, fully cognisant of their role in educating and directing future citizens who are able to resist the corruptions of society. Therefore, Sophie does not dominate Emile, nor does

[111] Linda Zerilli, "'Une Maitresse Imperieuse': Women in Rousseau's Semiotic Republic'," in *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Lynda Lange, ed., University Park, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002, p. 284.
[112] Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation*, p. 60; and Jane Roland Martin, 'Sophie and Emile: A Case Study of Sex Bias in the History of Educational Thought', *Harvard Educational Review*, 51, 1981, pp. 357-372.

he dominate her; together, they highlight the fact that power relations and inter-dependency exist in every human relationship.

I feel Sophie's education is inadequate because in manipulating Emile to perform societal tasks he has not been taught to execute, she is governing a completely dependent individual (who thinks he is independent) without being independent herself. As she shares several traits and abilities with the tutor, he abdicates his authority over Emile to Sophie on their marriage. Like the tutor, she is 'neither magistrate nor sovereign', is able to 'see all of man's passions and experiences them' and 'see through others, discern what is in their hearts and transform their hearts through subtle manipulation and deception'.[113] However, unlike the tutor, Sophie will not be able to subsist without Emile because she 'depends on [his] sentiments, on the value [he] sets on her merit, on the importance [he] attaches to her charms and her virtues' (Em V, 364). The moment she no longer has power over him, she will no longer be able to practice her virtues; and they will be insufficient to save her from corruption because she had not been taught to look within herself to see the values she has therein. The situation is no different for Emile. His entire education *deliberately* keeps him ignorant of the extent of his dependence on the tutor and later, Sophie (Em IV, 332). Disguising his dependency on the tutor and Sophie as a dependency on things only makes him more dependent on them. The moment tutor leaves at the end of *Emile* and Emile chooses to ignore Sophie's advice in *Emile et Sophie*, Emile's life falls apart. This is so much so that their departure heralds his descent into the corruptions of society. Ironically, the education he receives from the tutor and later, Sophie, is supposed to immunise him against these societal ills. As evinced in *Emile et Sophie*, the moment Emile fails to heed Sophie's advice (in not leaving for Paris), Emile

[113] Refer to Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 2.7.1, pp. 68-69

has an affair and temporarily forgets himself and his wife's virtues, thereby bringing unhappiness and destruction upon himself and his family. Likewise, when Sophie has no one on whom to exert her power, she displays her virtues to all and falls prey to the first one who wants to corrupt her merits, causing the whole structure that Rousseau's educations prepared for them to crumble. In short, both Emile and Sophie's educations are inadequate because Emile and Sophie are made to live vicariously through each other.

Summary and Conclusion

Sophie's education has generated much debate on account of her education differing from Emile's. Since her education is in relation to men, scholars are divided as to Rousseau's vision of female education. Commentators decrying Sophie's apparent subordination to men complain that her education makes her 'constrained and passive' and is a manifestation of Rousseau's fear of female sexual power. Others recommend that her education ought to be read within the context of its time. As men and women's educations then reflected their different social functions as husband-breadwinner and housewife-mother, Sophie's education may be seen as a subtle empowerment of women.[114] While her education may seek to be empowering, some scholars suggest that it is inadequate because Sophie is educated to be a caregiver not a governor of the home. Due to these differing perspectives, critics are still debating on the nature of Sophie's education.

As Sophie is educated to be a housewife-mother and Emile is educated to be a breadwinner-husband, their educations prepare them for their eventual formation of 'the

[114] Jagger, 'Political Philosophies of Women's Liberation', p. 6.

ideal unit of man, wife and children maintained by the earnings of the first alone'.[115] As husband and wife are to work together to maintain the household, Emile and Sophie are mutually dependent upon their marriage. In their mutual dependence, Rousseau seeks to reconcile that which is naturally in them to the requirements of the existing social order (Em V, 357). In so doing, Rousseau highlights the importance of sexual politics and by extension, power relations in human interactions; he also demonstrates how his creations of the ideal citizen and the ideal state are able to check each other in an imperfect and corrupted world.

The next chapter shall explore the nature of sexual politics in shaping these creations as well as their impact on each other.

[115] Hilary Land, 'The Family Wage', *Feminist Review*, No. 6, 1980, p. 72.

Chapter 4. Creating the Ideal Citizen and the Ideal State through *Emile's* Sexual Politics

"My views had been much more extended by means of historical study of morality. I had come to believe that *everything* is rooted in politics."

Rousseau, *Confessions* IX.

Emile's innovative educational programme and Sophie' conventional education highlight the continued controversy surrounding the intent of *Emile*. I believe *Emile* is not merely a sexist tirade on women or a pedagogical project for the creation of ideal man in society. Rather, Emile and Sophie's educations create the ideal citizen and the ideal state. The ideal citizen is one who is capable of coping with the exigencies and corruptions of existing society. The ideal state is one who makes her citizens want to be virtuous citizens, thereby protecting them from the harms in existent civil society. Given the interdependency of the ideal citizen and ideal state, I contend they come about through sexual politics.

Sexual Politics

Sexual politics considers the gender differences and analyses the power relations between the sexes.[116] Kate Millett extends this definition by recommending the examination of power relations between men and women in formal groups (such as races, castes, classes, sexes) and in the family.[117] In taking into account the implications and dynamics of male-female relations, sexual politics seeks to understand human sexuality and how it affects the constructs of gender. Sexual politics is deployed by each gender in

[116] Mary Seidman Trouille, *Sexual Politics in the Enlightenment: Women Writers Read Rousseau*, Albany, SUNY Press, 1997, p. 1.
[117] Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, London, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1971, p. 24.

their treatment of each other. Thus, Sophie uses sexual politics to manipulate Emile without his knowledge, and Emile uses sexual politics to demonstrate that he is the ostensible head of the household by 'ruling' (so to speak) over Sophie. Sexual politics in *Emile* as I understand it combines Millett's and Simone de Beauvoir's notions of the term where the sexes have a 'separate but equal' status, that is, the male and the female are equal in terms of the power they are able to impose on each other and separate in the manner through which that power is exacted.[118] Unlike de Beauvoir and Millett, I believe the sexual politics in *Emile* should be considered within the context of the time in which Rousseau wrote it. Therefore, I interpret the 'separate but equal' nature of the sexual politics in *Emile* not as a relationship where the subordinate party, viz., the female, remains permanently subordinated (to the male). Rather, I am of the opinion that the 'separate but equal' relationship between the sexes stems from Rousseau's notion of clearly delineated gender roles within *Emile* is one where 'woman rules man by submitting to his will and knowing how to make him will what she needs to submit to… in this way, Emile's freedom is preserved without Sophie's will being denied'.[119] In other words, it is both a means for those conscious of their subordinate position to obtain some power, and a method of maintaining the illusion of self-sufficiency for those who think they are autonomous while encouraging them to acquire the virtues necessary for their socialisation so as to 'struggle with [themselves], to conquer [themselves], to sacrifice [their] interest to the common interest' (Em IV, 473). Seen in this light then, it is my contention that sexual politics in *Emile* is used to create the ideal citizen (Emile) by

[118] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans., H. M. Parshley, New York, Vintage Books, 1989, pp. 431and 455.
[119] Allan Bloom, 'Introduction', in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, New York, Basic Books, 1979 p. 25

keeping him enthralled with the virtues embodied in the ideal state. These virtues will ensure that Emile is able to survive in existing civil society without being corrupted by it. Sexual politics is used to create the ideal state (Sophie) by 'endowing her with the ability to see through others, discern what is in their hearts, and transform them'.[120] This is because her sexuality masks her true intention of ruling. Hence, she uses her sexuality to excite Emile's passions and covertly transmutes his heart through opinion without his knowledge so as to transform him from 'a perfect and solitary whole into part of a larger whole from which [he] would …receive his life and being.' (SC, 2.7.3)[121]

The importance of sexual politics is outlined at the beginning of *Emile* where we are informed, the 'first education [of children] belongs incontestably to women'. This is because 'the laws, always is occupied with property, and so little with persons, because their object is peace and not *virtue* – do not give enough authority to mothers… [whose] status is more certain than that of fathers' (Em I, 37). The object of Emile's education then is the attainment of virtue, which Sophie has to impart to him and teach him to love. Thus, the importance of women's role in shaping men through love (maternal and otherwise) is conveyed at the very beginning of the text. Women, as wives and mothers, as intimated above, are capable of using sexual politics to imbue the males around them with virtue.

Sexual politics emerges most clearly at the end of Book IV and in Book V with the introduction of Emile's sexual (and by extension, socio-political) education as well as Sophie and her education. At the end of Book IV, the tutor seeks to curb the 'sexually

[120] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'The Social Contract', in *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, Victor Gourevitch, ed. and trans., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, Book 2, chapter 7.
[121] Ingrid Makus, 'The Politics of "Feminine Concealment" and "Masculine Openness" in Rousseau', in *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Lynda Lange, ed., University Park, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002, p. 202.

awakened' Emile's 'nascent imagination' by directing it towards a search of Sophie so that he will feel 'the need for a mistress' (Em IV, 215). This channelling of Emile's imagination to a sexual object (Sophie) discourages him from unwonted sexual activity.[122] Emile also learns that coming to grips with his 'nascent sexuality' entails learning about socio-political matters, for sexual politics teaches him 'the most necessary art for a man and a citizen' is 'knowing how to live with his fellows' (Em IV, 328). Sexual politics teaches him how to be 'a member of society' because it teaches him how to coexist in society with others who are nothing like him. This is because the first stirrings of a need of a mistress leads to the need for a friend, thus resulting in the species affecting him before the female sex (Em IV, 215). Thus, before Emile becomes sexually active, he has to sublimate or channel his sexual energy into acquiring the capacity to pity others, to befriend others, to act with humanity.[123]

Through Sophie, Emile's sexual and socio-political educations become one. His sexual education becomes a social one when it compels him to enter society and mingle with its inhabitants in his search for Sophie. By venturing into society, he learns about society and the different people that compose it. He comes to see the society and the people in it for what they are – decadent and corrupt. As he realises he has to work in society, he learns he is 'not made to remain always solitary'. Thus, he learns to live with others with different views by obtaining 'a good grasp of social practices' (Em IV, 327). Emile's sexual education becomes political when he learns about the corruptions inherent in society in his sojourns for he studies the systems in which society functions. In interacting with others while searching for Sophie, he learns 'the most necessary art for a

[122] Joel Schwartz, *Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1985, pp. 79-81.
[123] Ibid., 80.

man and a citizen… is knowing how to live with his fellows' (Em IV, 328). His sexual education becomes political when he searches for and finds Sophie, for it teaches him to love goodness in and for itself. This love in turn edifies the responsibility it engenders, for he must protect that which he loves.

Rousseau's View of Women and Sexuality

Despite Sophie's presence, the quest for her and Emile's ensuing socio-political education, many commentators still regard *Emile* as a pedagogical text for the rearing of children. Emile's sexual education clearly elicits that human beings are 'meant to live in cities' because 'the state rather than the marketplace is the appropriate realm to privilege when organising our common life'.[124] Sophie's education and Emile's quest for her play a central role in making him an ideal citizen, for it demonstrates that woman is the key to reforming politics. However, most scholars do not interpret *Emile* thus because they gloss over Sophie's presence as a mere appendage to Emile, and are caught up in Emile's education in the first four books. Commentators who take into consideration Book V and its sexual politics are, on the other hand, absorbed in the debate surrounding Rousseau's ambiguous treatment of women and sexuality.

In all his writings, Rousseau puts across two views of women, where they are either portrayed as:

(1) Virtuous creatures who ought to be given a hand in governing men because '…relatively speaking, women would have been able to be the better examples of noble-mindedness and love of virtue than men, if our unjust prejudice had not deprived them of

[124] Nicole Fermon, *Domesticating Passions: Rousseau, Woman and Politics*, Hanover and London, Wesleyan University Press, 1997, p. 2.

their liberty and the opportunity to express these qualities in our world…. If women had had as proportionate a share as men in managing affairs and governing empires, they would have brought heroism and courage to greater heights and more of them might have distinguished themselves in this manner'(*Femmes*, 1255)[125]; or

(2) The instruments of men's corruption (and indeed societies') due to their great, near limitless sexuality. Women are criticised severely for allegedly possessing the 'facility… for exciting men's senses and for awakening, deep in their hearts, the remnants of a most feeble disposition, if there existed some unfortunate climate on earth where philosophy might have introduced a practice [whereby women initiate aggression], especially in hot climates where more women than men are born, men would be women's victims, tyrannized by them, and they would all end up dragged to their death without any means of defense.' (Em V, 467)

These two seemingly conflicting views of women also give rise to two disparate views of sexuality; both of which, ironically, acknowledge the importance of the bodily (and biological) differences between men and women. In *Emile*, as in his other works, Rousseau has two views on sexuality:

(1) Sexuality ought to be celebrated because it makes us individual parts of a layer of socio-sexual whole.[126] It teaches us 'to live with men… to see how one lives in society' so that we can understand the 'hidden mechanism of this great stage [i.e. society]' (Em IV, 327) and acquire 'a sincere love of justice as a true respect for truth' (Em V, 458).

[125] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Sur les femmes' in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. II, Paris Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1964, p. 1255. My translation.
[126] Schwartz, *Sexual Politics*, p. 7.

(2) Sexuality is condemned as the source of corruption in modern society.[127] It corrupts society because it 'drags [men] to death without ever being able to defend themselves' (Em IV, 359). Ungoverned sexuality causes men to 'lose not only their morals [manners], but [they] lose their morals [manners] and our constitutions'; it 'turns men into women' (*Alembert*, 100).

In electing to see women as either virtuous and capable creatures or the instruments of men's (and society's) corruption, the debate as to the meaning of Sophie's education and presence in *Emile* continues. Similarly, viewing sexuality as either a celebratory teaching or a corrupting influence, will affect a reader's interpretation of Sophie's purpose in *Emile*. I contend that Rousseau's exposition of these conflicting views of sexuality and ambiguities about women is part of his project to reconcile them in Emile's and Sophie's educations. Upon reconciling them so that Emile's education is completed through the search for Sophie, Emile and Sophie's educations can be said to be instrumental in transforming him into the ideal citizen and her into the ideal state. The diametrically opposed Rousseauian views of women and sexuality highlight the significance of Sophie in Emile's education as well as the important role she will play in Emile's life when he has completed his education and becomes the ideal citizen.

I believe that Sophie completes Emile's education because 'the induction of sexual politics and women are at the centre of Rousseau's project to reform politics, which for him means all human relations'.[128] In seeing the civil state as a corrupted entity full of general social ills, Rousseau uses Sophie to demonstrate the sensuous nature of man, who is no longer motivated by a rational *telos*, by social appetites or by an

[127] Ibid.
[128] Fermon, *Domesticating Passions*, p. 4.

identifiable conception of the good life.[129] As man is now governed by social appetites, social arrangements are needed to satisfy them. The chief social arrangement to do so is the family. Thus, social arrangements like the family (and by extension women in it) drive the 'transformation of the original passions into sentiments that circumscribes the sphere of political as well as moral development'.[130] Sexual politics in *Emile* is used to produce the morally upright ideal citizen because it introduces the notion of power relations in society and its numerous social arrangements (the family being one of them).

Emile as Ideal Citizen

As Emile's socio-political education is tied to the introduction of Sophie and the quest for her, her education and her role in his sexual education can therefore be considered as the means to complete his education. It is no coincidence that Rousseau labels Book V of *Emile* as the 'age of wisdom'.[131] The tutor's methods in tempering Emile's sexuality, Sophie's appearance and Emile's quest to find and wed her leads him to desire the virtues and wisdom she embodies, thereby insulating him from the evils in society. This insulation enables him to fulfil his role as the ideal citizen.

In seeking and desiring Sophie, Emile is seeking and desiring wisdom. This is not surprising given that Sophie's name comes from the Greek word for wisdom, s*ophia*. He needs wisdom and its attendant virtues so that he can 'play his part in society without degenerating through the evil influences' therein.[132] This quest for wisdom hinges on Emile's love of its attendant virtues. In order to find wisdom, Emile has to realise that he

[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] See Michel Launay 'Introduction', in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile ou de l'éducation*, Paris, GF Flammarion, 1966, pp. 16-18.
[132] Kennedy F. Roche, *Rousseau: Stoic and Romantic*, London, Methuen & Co, 1974, pp. 47-48

'is not made to remain always solitary' and must learn 'how to live with his fellows' (Em IV, 327). Upon entering society, he sees for himself how inter-human relationships function. Thus, he learns about politics and the ways of society, and soon understands that for all his ability to live like Robinson Crusoe, he is 'made to live with man… to know individuals… to see how to live in society' (Em IV, 327). This quest for Sophie and his later enforced separation from her show him the extent to which modern society is corrupted by ungovernable passions.

Once wisdom is acquired, Emile learns of the various political systems in place and begins to 'consider himself in his civil relations with his fellow citizens' (Em V, 455). This love for wisdom and the values that it imbues in him 'prevent[s] him from being passion's slave'. Wisdom enables him to observe society and politics objectively. Emile gains wisdom when he realises his education does not make him as independent as he assumed he was. He understands there is nowhere 'one can live independent and free without needing to harm anyone and without fear of being harmed' and that it is not 'easy to find the country where one is always permitted to be a decent man' (Em V, 457). Once he realises this, he will remain true to his education and acquire 'health, strength, courage, the virtues of love itself and all the true goods of man' (Em IV, 324-5).

The sexual politics indicated in Sophie's education, Emile's pursuit of her and their relations with each other, completes Emile's education as it teaches him that man has to be social in society and women are agents of men's socialisation; as the quest for Sophie occurs in tandem with Emile's sexual education, it evinces 'sexuality is not

simply a biological phenomenon, instead sexual relations are inconceivable without the psychological desire to dominate'.[133]

Sophie's education and Emile's interaction with her cannot be discounted as being out of place in *Emile* otherwise Rousseau would not have made explicit the importance of women in his educational project. By saying that 'man would learn from women what must be done' (Em V, 377), Rousseau reinforces his belief, propounded in both his *Letter to Lenieps* and the *Second Discourse* that 'the fate of [the female] sex will always be to govern [men]'[134] and 'women rule men and make of them whatever they please'.[135] Sophie is more than a showcase of Rousseau's ideal education for a female, for she is the cause of Emile's aspiration to marriage and by extension, the aspiration to 'the status of husband and father' (Em V, 448). She is brought up to have to 'the ambition of the women of Sparta, which was to command men' (Em V, 393) so much so that her power 'exercised solely in the conjugal union, makes itself felt only for the glory of the state and the public happiness'.[136] If Sophie's education was to show how an ideal female child should be raised, there would not be so many examples of her future role vis-à-vis civil society. Moreover, if Sophie is meant to be the ideally bred Rousseauian female, references to her should stop at her relationship with the man for whom she is 'made'. Rousseau, however, paints Sophie as more than a mate and helpmeet; her existence engenders in Emile the necessity of studying the duties of a husband and father, and thence, citizen. She forces him to consider what 'taking a place in the civil order… and

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[133] Ibid., p. 13.
[134] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Second Discourse', in *The First and Second Discourses*, edited with introduction and notes by Roger D. Masters, Roger D. Masters and Judith R. masters, trans., New York, St Martin's Press, 1964, p. 89.
[135] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Letter à Lenieps', 8 November 1758, in *Correspondence Générale de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Vol. 4, Théophile Dufour, ed., Paris, 1924-32, pp. 115-116.
[136] Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, Masters, trans., p. 89.

know[ing] it' entails; her presence as well as Emile's quest for and desire to wed her necessitates his education as to 'what government, laws and fatherland are' (Em V, 448). As Sophie is the medium through which Emile learns of politics, her role in his education cannot be overlooked:

> Women would be the eye and man the arm. They would be so dependent on one another that woman would learn from man what should be seen and *man would learn from women what must be done*….
>
> (Em V, 377)

Sophie and Emile are dependent on each other for she will tell him whether something is good and virtuous (hence she is the "eye"); as Emile will defend her if necessary, he is the "arm." Likewise, Sophie will learn from Emile what is worthy of her attention and he will learn from her what has to be done to remain uncorrupted.

Emile's sexual politics, while offensive to many modern women readers in advocating that women ought to be pleasing to men, is not entirely antifeminist. Rousseau reminds us that 'men are dependent on women as women are on men: Each would follow the impetus of the other; each would obey and *both* would be masters' (Em V, 377, my emphasis). Although women's 'natural' biological (that is, physical) weakness is highlighted, Rousseau states that men do not naturally rule women. Rather, women rule men 'because nature wants it that way; it belonged to women before they appeared to have it' (Em V, 360). Men only *appear* more dominant because they are physically stronger. Superior physical strength does not herald supremacy or independence because while 'the stronger appears to be the master… [he] actually depends on the weaker' (Em V, 360).

Sophie as Ideal State

Given this then, it is evident that sexual politics and women's role in it are central to the project of creating the ideal citizen – Emile. Prior to that, the ideal citizen must have an ideal state (*la patrie*). Sophie's education and the other references to women in *Emile* are expressly for the creation of the creation of the ideal state (*la patrie*). Sophie as *la patrie* is a reading that comes across most clearly in French. Although *la patrie* may be translated as fatherland, I interpret it as 'state' because Rousseau's 'fatherland' is supposed to provide solicitude for its citizens.[137] According to Rousseau, the 'fatherland' is more than a country in that it cares for its citizens. This is because *la patrie* ought to have 'a wise administration for the maintenance of good morals and respect for laws'.[138] This understanding of *la patrie* as a country and its administration is, in turn, a description of the state. Rousseau's ideal state is free because it is founded on human convention. This convention ensures the security of the persons in it and protects their right to property.[139] If the ideal state is to remain free, it must 'teach and form [its] citizens when they are children' so that they become 'virtuous'.[140] It ought to do this through natural law, which is understood as the natural moral standards governing human behaviour. The ideal state can only possess these moral standards if it is wise and virtuous. The ideal state can only be wise and virtuous if the human conventions in her education teach her so.

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[137] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Discourse on Political Economy', in *Social Contract and other later political writings*, Victor Gourevitch, ed., and trans., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 18.
[138] Rousseau, *Political Economy*, p. 20.
[139] Roche, *Rousseau*, p. 61.
[140] Rousseau, *Political Economy*, p. 20.

Sophie's education renders her wise and virtuous because it teaches her about 'our institutions', 'our practices', 'our proprieties' while 'cultivating her mind and her reason' (Em V, 383). She is imbued with wisdom when she is taught to look beyond herself, 'study the minds of men around her' (Em V, 387), 'weigh public opinion' and judge men (Em V, 398). She is virtuous because she is taught to be modest, 'self-controlled, decent and loveable' (Em V, 393). This enables her to counsel moderation, teach her citizens temperance, and judge men morally. Thus, as the ideal state, she is able to impart the love of wisdom and virtue to her citizens through subtle coquetry.

Rousseau seeks to recreate the state because 'there is no longer fatherland [*la patrie*] for ideal citizens' (Em I, 40). In short, Emile cannot be an ideal citizen if there is no ideal state for him. There is 'no longer fatherland' because people have become so self-centred and corrupted by greed that there is no longer any common good, common social interests or common bonds holding the people together (*SC*, 2.1.1). As this 'social pact' of common interests, common bonds and common good is 'the heart of the State', the moment 'it is injured …the State instantly die[s], collapse[s] and dissolve[s].'[141] As the corruption of mankind has wrought the downfall of the state, Rousseau must recreate both. Thus, he educates Emile to be the ideal citizen and Sophie, the ideal state to esteem and depend on each other. Emile is taught to resist the temptations of society and love wisdom and virtue. Sophie is brought up 'conventionally' because a state is formed from human convention.

[141] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'The State of War', in *Social Contract and other later political writings*, Victor Gourevitch, ed., and trans., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, paragraph 36, p. 171.

From the outset, Rousseau stressed that *Emile* was written for women, as they shape the mores and sentiments of their children and families, enabling them to be productive citizens of the state:

> The first education is the most important and this first education belongs incontestably to women…for they are in a position to watch over it more closely than are men and always have greater influence on it, *they also have much interest in its success*…. The laws – always so occupied with property and so little with persons, because their object is peace not *virtue* – do not give enough authority to mothers. However, their status is more certain than that of fathers; their duties more painful; their cares more important for the good order of the family.
>
> (Em I, 37)

In other words, women are the educators of men in that they make men what they wish and men can only be redeemed if women are re-educated.[142] Citizens are dependent on the state as men are dependent on women; as such, 'the formation of the children [i.e. citizens] depends on the formation of mothers [i.e. the state]' (Em V, 475). Little wonder then that 'the first education of 'men depends on the care of women; the manners, passions, tastes, pleasures and even happiness of men depends on women' (Em V, 475). This re-education of women not only promotes them as procreators but cements their ability to administer wealth and educate the sentiments of household members.[143] As the state, women have to re-educate their citizens (be they husbands or children) so that they

[142] Schwartz, *Sexual Politics*, p. 5.
[143] Fermon, *Domesticating Passions*, p. 50.

become worthy of loving them (*la patrie*) loyally. To do this, the state must institute political reform by reforming the mores or characters of its citizens.[144]

While it may appear very chauvinistic of Rousseau to make such an assertion, it has to be borne in mind that his definition of Emile and Sophie's natures, potentialities and talents are selective precisely because he has mapped their functions of female-state and male-citizen on them. Rousseau *chooses* to develop those talents and potentialities in each sex with the role he assigns them.[145] Rousseau does not permit Sophie and children the authority to make their own decisions or Emile's. Neither is Emile granted the authority to make his own decision, for he *must be a citizen* – he has *no* choice in these matters.[146] As such, in her role as state (or *la patrie*), Sophie will teach her daughters to share her qualities and her sons to share Emile's qualities. Her daughters will be like her, *les patries* writ small in that they will be the nurturing and caring means of political socialisation for men when they grow up and marry. Like their mother, they will teach men to cast off their own purposes, needs and satisfactions for the greater good of the citizens and by extension, the state. Likewise, Sophie's sons, who are destined to be citizens like Emile (for Rousseau, the citizen is invariably male), will learn how to act and feel for one another and for the state (women), as well as what she does and feels for her husband and children.[147] Through Sophie, Rousseau may be said to have attempted to rehabilitate men to each other by:

> 'reason[ing] from nature that [his] political prescription for mankind's salvation were best secured if, and only if, virtue was taught to prospective

[144] Ibid.
[145] Jane Roland Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1985, p. 48. My emphasis.
[146] Ibid, pp. 48-53. My emphasis.
[147] Ibid., p. 61.

> citizens [men]; and if not in its fullest philosophical meaning, then at least sufficiently to integrate them into civil society through various conventional means, that they might submit to authority as their rulers [women] had, though not necessarily in the same way or for the same reasons, but always under the moral guidance of nature.'[148]

By being 'pleasing to men' and appearing weak and dependent, Sophie inflames Emile's love for her. As the state, Sophie is helpless, she cannot defend herself; she needs her citizens to defend her. A state's citizens will only treat her with reverence if she is fair to them. The fatherland is an entity that has to be shaped by its citizens and Emile does so by educating Sophie while kneeling at her feet. Although this position may be understood as a gesture of courtly love,[149] it indicates the citizens' respect for the state while he learns from her. As Sophie is sedentary and bound to the home, so is the state. The state is immobile; its public face is the citizen (in this case, Emile, the husband). A good state (Sophie) needs good citizens (Emile) to uphold its values and provide it with a face and a voice. Likewise, the ideal citizen with the right values 'loves *la patrie* and lives for it alone' because this love is 'his whole existence; he sees only *la patrie*, he lives only for

[148] John S. Treantafelles, 'On the Teachability of Virtue: Political Philosophy's Paradox', *Interpretation*, 30, 1, Fall 2002, p. 25

[149] Courtly love is a tradition that began in the High Middle Ages (c.1150-1500). In the tradition, a knight must pass the greatest test – the test of true love – if he is to grow wise, strong and pure. This test of true love comes to pass in his encounter with a noble woman. The whole tradition of courtly love sprang from the outward emancipation of highborn woman at that time. Although she was still wholly dependent on her husband, she could now enter the male centred world with equal status. Knights played at courtly love with these noble women in acknowledgement of their spiritual and sensual qualities of valour, honour and fidelity that they represented in their superior education. In paying court to them in this manner, the knight hopes to acquire the same qualities his chosen lady embodies. Emile's interactions with Sophie could be interpreted to have the same overtones.

it; when he is alone, he is nothing: when he no longer has *la patrie*, he no longer is' (*Poland* IV.2).[150] Thus, from their mutual need is sprung their mutual love.

In light of Emile's love for Sophie and all that she stands for, and the fact that she is expected to govern the grown man Emile has become at the end of Book V, Emile cannot be said to be totally independent because by the end of *Emile*, he is bound to the will of the ideal state and the general will. Rousseau, as the tutor carefully plans and stage-manages every aspect of Emile's life so that he's not really free even though he thinks he is independent and free. The tutor's (*le gouverneur*[151]) methods are only a means of preparing Emile to move from his governance to that of Sophie, who is the representation of wisdom and the ideal state. Indeed, Rousseau declares the day after the wedding, 'Today I abdicate the authority you confided in me, and Sophie is your governor from now on' (Em V, 479); doing so leaves Emile 'to the service of the fatherland' (or more properly, the state) where he must 'leave everything to go to fulfil the honourable function of citizen' (Em V, 474). In short, by first learning to bow to the subtle governance of the tutor (*le gouverneur*) and then Sophie (*la patrie*), Emile comes to learn how he can will the general will. For in marrying Sophie, he learns the duties of a father and a citizen. Once Emile forms his family and household, Sophie will reign by using her wisdom to inculcate the values of care and mutual concern amongst its members, thereby educating them to be citizens competent in willing the general will. In

[150] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland' in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 189.

[151] In French, the male tutor is called 'le gouverneur' (the governor), and the female tutor is called 'la gouvernante' (the governess). They are so-called because they 'govern' the children to be disciplined, well-mannered, well-bred and intelligent. While the English and French versions of 'governess' is very close to each other, the English and French versions of 'tutor' differ. In English, 'governor' has political overtones. The private teachers hired to teach children of the aristocrats and the gentry were not considered transmitters of political education.

other words, by instructing her citizens to appreciate and love of her wisdom and virtues, Sophie teaches her citizens that the general will is directed towards securing their common interests. This means that Sophie's will (manifested as care, concern and education of others) will be as natural law or natural moral standards, teaching her citizens to secure what is in their common interest. As the state, Sophie nurtures her husbands and sons as citizens, cares for them and ensures that they serve her well by willing the general will.

Sophie's role as the ideal state is further compounded in her exchange of books with Emile before his two-year study of political systems in his travels. Emile receives Sophie's favourite book, Fénelon's *Telemachus*. *Telemachus* is more than a story about the heroic son of Odysseus; it is a story very much like *Emile*, in that it deals with the political and moral education of a young man, Telemachus, by a wise, knowledgeable and virtuous tutor, who is actually a woman.[152]

Telemachus is in search of his father Odysseus/Ulysses. He first visits Nestor and Menelaus, but soon leaves for Sicily where rumours have placed his father. Throughout his journey, he is accompanied by Mentor, who is actually the goddess of wisdom and war, Athena/Minerva. His search for Odysseus/Ulysses takes him to the Underworld, the Elysian Fields and finally, home to Ithaca. At the Elysian Fields, he meets his great-grandfather Arcesius and learns, 'Good kings are rare and the generality of monarchs bad.'[153] This mirrors Emile's discovery that though there is some good in the world, the bulk of humanity has been corrupted by their selfishness and acquisitiveness. Like Emile,

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[152] Patrick Riley, 'Rousseau, Fénelon and the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns', in *Cambridge Companion to Rousseau*, Patrick Riley, ed., New York, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 82.

[153] Francois Fénelon, *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*, Patrick Riley, ed., and trans., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p.254.

Telemachus learns to value 'a simple and frugal life' and realise that those 'who have the art of making superb buildings, furniture of gold and silver, fabrics ornamented with embroideries and with precious stones, exquisite perfumes… are very unfortunate to have used up so much labour and industry in order to corrupt themselves. These superfluidities enervate, intoxicate, and torment those who possess it, while they tempt those that are destitute of them to have recourse to violence and injustice to acquire them.'[154] To prevent himself from falling prey to this mode of corruption, Telemachus, like Emile, must search for wisdom and learn from nature. In searching for his father, Telemachus receives a great deal of moral and civic instruction from Mentor and the other characters he meets, most notably Idomeneus. Originally a tyrant-king of Crete, Idomeneus had been deposed and exiled for killing his son. But he gradually reforms and under Mentor's guidance, learns to 'establish the wisest laws and institute a long peace' whereupon he finally becomes the good and just King of Salente.[155] At the end of the book, Mentor is revealed as Athena/Minerva, Telemachus is reunited with his father and he has acquired wisdom and virtue.

Fénelon wrote in a letter that *Telemachus* contains 'all the truths necessary to government, and all the faults that one can find in sovereign power.'[156] Although Rousseau claims 'Emile is not a king and I am not a god, we do not fret about not being able to imitate Telemachus and Mentor in the good that they did for men' (Em V, 467),

[154] Ibid., pp. 109-110.
[155] Ibid., p. 152-3
[156] Francois Fénelon, 'Letter to Letellier', in *Oeuvres de Fénelon*, Vol. III, Paris, Bonnot, 1835, pp. 653-654, quoted in Patrick Riley, 'Rousseau, Fénelon and the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns', p. 82.

the fact remains that the person holding up the entire plot in *Telemachus* is the moral-civic tutor or *gouverneur*, Mentor.[157]

I contend that the same can be said for *Emile*. As in *Telemachus*, nothing occurs in *Emile* without the tutor's careful planning, meticulous direction and subtle manipulation. Like Telemachus's Mentor, Emile's tutor educates him to prevent his corruption by society so that he will not be an Idomeneus – a tyrant with excessive *amour propre*. In giving him *Telemachus* to read before his sojourn, Sophie is indirectly warning him against the ills of society; she is warning him against becoming a Rousseauian Idomeneus – the Rousseauian bourgeois in society, who according to Bloom, 'are only concerned with comfortable self-preservation so much so that he only thinks of himself when dealing with others'.[158] Preventing Emile from being corrupted by society into becoming a bourgeois is important because now that he has met Sophie and acquired wisdom by 'consider[ing] himself in his physical relations with other beings and his moral relations with other men', he must now 'consider himself in his civil relations with his fellow citizens' by 'studying the nature of government in general, the diverse forms of government, and finally, the particular government under which he was born' (Em V, p. 455). In entering civil society, Emile may be tempted by the corruptions therein. *Telemachus* warns Emile of the ills in civil society and teaches him a lesson from Rousseau's *Political Economy*, specifically, that 'the fundamental principles of political society is that of preferring the public to the self – not through hope of serving one's interest, but through the *simple pure disinterested love of the political order, which is*

[157] Patrick Riley goes further in his interpretation of Fénelon's *Telemachus* as he considers the character of Mentor the main hero of the work.
[158] Allan Bloom, 'Introduction', in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, trans., Allan Bloom, New York, Basic Books, 1979, p. 5

beauty, justice and virtue itself.'[159] This follows the principle of the general will, which is the people securing what is in their common interest.

Sophie, as the embodiment of beauty, justice, and virtue, gets Emile to read *Telemachus* so that he will learn about the general will and become the ideal citizen. For like the citizens in the *Social Contract*, Emile is brought up to believe he is the master where in actuality, it is the tutor, who like the lawgiver in the *Social Contract*, is the master. As Rousseau informs us, 'there is no subjection so perfect as that which keeps the appearance of freedom… thus the will [of the people, in this case, it is Emile's will] itself is made captive (Em II, 120). In giving *Telemachus* to Emile to read, Sophie is alerting him to the true role of his tutor as 'an extraordinary man of the state' (*SC*, 2.7.4)[160] who like Telemachus's Mentor, frames a system of laws that will serve as a framework for the new political order in which Emile/Telemachus will inhabit. As *Telemachus* reveals, Mentor, like Emile's tutor is the lawgiver in that he gets people, namely Emile, to 'act not by means of arguments establishing the rationality of their/his action, but by inspiring them through the inflammation of their passions.'[161] As a figure like the lawgiver and Mentor, the tutor teaches Emile how to be a citizen by inspiring in him the love for Sophie. This love for Sophie is deliberately inflamed when Emile is repeatedly told of Sophie's simplicity, charms and virtues. Through the inflammation of his desire for Sophie, Emile comes to be a father and a citizen. In forming the family, the tutor claims that Emile will learn about politics and natural equality. *Telemachus* then instructs Emile

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[159] Refer to Rousseau, *Political Economy*,. See also Fénelon, 'Sur le pur amour' (On Pure Love), in *Oeuvres de Fénelon*, Vol. I, Paris, Bonnot, 1835, pp. 307-310, quoted in Patrick Riley, 'Rousseau, Fénelon and the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns', p. 85.

[160] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'The Social Contract', in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 69

[161] Christopher Bertram, *Rousseau and the Social Contract*, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 139.

in all these things and indeed, he realises the importance of his tutor's role as lawgiver of the ideal state over the ideal citizen, for he invites him to:

> Remain the master of the young masters. Advise us and govern us. We will be docile. As long as I live, I shall need you. I need you more than ever now that my functions as a man [and citizen] begin.
>
> (Em V, p. 480)

Similarly, in taking over the role of 'governance' from the tutor, Sophie becomes comparable to Telemachus's Mentor, the goddess Athena/Minerva. Like Athena/Minerva, Sophie is the personification of wisdom. She provides him with 'advice and guidance for the rest of his life' (Em V, 479) by teaching him to love wisdom and in so doing, he comes to love 'sensitivity, virtue, and decent things' (Em V, 433). In teaching Emile to love her wisdom and virtue, Sophie teaches him 'to abandon everything when virtue decrees it…, to be courageous in adversity…, to be firm in his duty so as never to be criminal' (Em V, 446).

Hence, in allowing Sophie's presence to complete Emile's education and in the tutor's encouragement of Emile's pursuit of her, the central position of women in *Emile*'s sexual politics is demonstrated. Women are central to sexual politics because they and their influence are politically decisive. By ruling Emile and using love to rule him, Sophie demonstrates that she is the 'fulcrum to the project of inculcat[ing] civic love in men's heart.'[162]

[162] Fermon, *Domesticating Passions*, p. 169.

Mutual Dependence and Coexistence of Ideal Citizen and Ideal State

Emile's union with Sophie is indicative of the union between the citizen and the state – this love that he has for her and her for him mirrors the exclusive love that citizens must have for their state.[163] The family then (as evinced by the union of Emile and Sophie) is the relationship of the citizen and the state writ small because she uses 'indirect legislation' to affect the moral existence of the citizen (Emile). This is a relationship where the woman uses her 'erotic energy in the reconstruction of familial life' as to institute a new education of sentiments in her [citizen-] husband.[164]

As the state and the embodiment of wisdom, beauty, justice and virtue, Sophie uses sexual politics to arouse his passions or *eros*. While *eros* is often associated with sexual desire, it is in fact more than that – it is the longing for a beautiful object (tangible or otherwise) to complete oneself. [165] As '*eros* …always depends on beliefs or opinions, we love *only* that we believe we need and what we believe we have the resourcefulness to acquire.'[166]

Since *eros* is the love of beautiful things (such as the qualities of wisdom, justice and virtue represented by Sophie), it leads to responsibility. Scholars might oppose the role of *eros* in *Emile*, as I have envisioned, as too Platonic to be part of Rousseau's political philosophy. However, I contend that Rousseau was an extremely close reader of Plato as evinced by the numerous references to the *Republic* in *Emile*; hence his borrowing of the idea that *eros* leads to responsibility ought to be no surprise. Moreover, given Emile's pursuit of Sophie as the beautiful object full of wisdom, justice and virtue

[163] Rousseau, *Poland*, chapter 3, paragraphs 1-3, p. 183-184.
[164] Fermon, *Domesticating Passions*, p. 51.
[165] Mark J. Lutz, 'The Problem of the Noble and the Practicality of Platonic Political Philosophy', *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 56, No. 1, February 1994, p. 100.
[166] Ibid.

as well as the responsibility he acquires in possessing her, it is clear that Rousseau intends for the citizen's (Emile's) love for the state (Sophie) to propel him into protecting her. This is the reason behind Rousseau's portrayal of women as creatures that should be left unseen after marriage and always constrained.

Sophie, as the ideal state, cannot defend herself. As she is literally the body politic, she will have to use 'art to make [men/citizens] want to do everything she… cannot do by [herself/itself]' (Em V, 387). This art that she deploys is the art of love that Rousseau claims is the weapon of every woman, for love when 'properly managed and willed produces moral order and probably conceived moral order as the ideal'[167] thereby resulting in the men/citizens' probity and their desire to defend the good that is the state/women. As the body politic, the state, like women, can be 'a prized battlefield', vulnerable to rape, plunder and conquest.

By extension, the state, like women, can produce new citizens to defend her and uphold her values and virtues. The citizen (Emile) is willing to enter into such an agreement with the state (Sophie) because he comes to know and love beauty, justice and virtue intimately during his courtship with her. Once the citizen is wedded to the state, he comes into complete possession of these values and they will continue to shape him. As Emile becomes the ideal citizen on his marriage to Sophie (*the ideal state*), he will do all that is within his power not to lose sight of these values and will allow them to influence him, for he realises on 'possess[ing] virtue' that 'nothing is more loveable than [it]' (Em IV, 291). Moreover, in loving the virtues Sophie has inculcated and inspired in him, and

[167] Leah Bradshaw, 'Rousseau on Civic Virtue, Male Autonomy, and the Construction of the Divided Female', in *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Lynda Lange, ed., Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002, p. 75.

living under her governance as well as the tutor's, Emile is able to live in civil society because he will not be easily corrupted by the ills therein.

The state, as personified by Sophie, exploits its citizens' *eros* and attachment by privatising it in the family so that they will not turn away from public concerns to private ones.[168] In short, the ideal state must use its citizens' *eros* to forward the general will (or common good) not their individual wills. Rousseau exemplifies this in the behaviour of the hostess and host at a dinner party in *Emile*:

> The master and mistress jointly do the honours…. The husband omits no care in order to be attentive to all… he would like to be all attentiveness. [As for the woman] nothing takes place that she does not notice; no one leaves to whom she has not spoken; she has omitted nothing that could interest everyone; she has said nothing to anyone that was not agreeable to him; and without in any way upsetting the order, the least important person among her company is no more forgotten than the most important…. Dinner is served… the man, knowledgeable about who gets along with whom, will seat them on the basis on what he knows. The woman, without knowing anything, will make no mistakes about it. She will have already read in their eyes and in their bearing, everything about who belongs with whom, and each guest will find himself where he wants to be… When the food is served, no one is forgotten. But even though the master of the house may have forgotten no one when he passed around the food, his wife goes further and divines what you look at with pleasure and offers you some. In speaking to her neighbour, she

[168] Schwartz, *Sexual Politics*, p. 60.

> has her eye on the end of the table; she distinguishes between the guest who does not eat because he is not hungry, and the one who does not help himself or to ask because he is awkward or timid. On leaving the table each guest believes that she has thought only of him.
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> (Em V, 383-384)

A laborious quote, I concede; however, within it are indications of Rousseau's model of citizenship and the ideal state. The man's behaviour in the above quotation, like Emile's, is located in him as a citizen (whom for Rousseau is always masculine). The male, as the citizen, learns to practice the general will (of seeing to the common comfort and good of all) by following the subtle nudges of the female or the state. He looks into himself to find what is common to all before uniformly applying this to all at the party; thus, he 'omits no care to be attentive to all' by being impartial from what he knows of himself.[169] The woman, as the state, has had a 'profound study of the minds of men around her' (Em V, 387), understands her citizens and is wise enough to know what will be in their best interest and how best to obtain their loyalty, praise and devotion.

This dinner party illustrates sexual politics in action whereby the citizen (the man) and the state (the female) manage their relationship to each other and others in the political space of civil society. The man/host of the dinner party, like Emile, has come to 'know how to live with men, know men, know what is done in society and how to live in society' (Em IV, 327) because he is able to use the general will to know others by knowing himself. Likewise, the woman/the hostess of the party, like Sophie, is 'self-controlled, decent and loveable' (Em V, 393) because she is 'the natural judge of men's

[169] Lori J. Marso, 'Rousseau's Subversive Women', in *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Lynda Lange, ed., Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002, p. 251.

merits' (Em V, 398). She is thus because she, unlike Emile, looks outside herself to understand the situation; she is aware of discord and seeks to smoothen it. Discord among the state's citizens does not maintain the general will, and as the ideal state, the woman has to look after her men. Through her wise use of her knowledge of 'our institutions', 'our practices', 'our proprieties' (Em V, 383), she is able to pre-empt any discord she detects. In being able to look beyond herself and observing 'the minds of men around her' (Em V, 387), she is virtuous and thus fully qualified to judge them (Em V, 398).

Since Emile's sexual education results in him learning to handle his *eros* appropriately and responsibly, it follows that his responsible love of the beautiful things of virtue and justice (learnt through his interactions with Sophie and her subtle shaping of him) guides his political education. After all, his relationship with Sophie and the charms she deploys to shape him into the ideal citizen informs him that power relations are pervasive in civil society. As Emile is neither meant to nor able to reshape the corrupt world where he must necessarily inhabit, he must be rendered fully equipped to cope with it. The sexual politics present with the introduction of Sophie and her effect of governing his 'morals', 'passions', 'tastes' and 'pleasures' (Em V, 365) while seemingly allowing Emile to teach her all that he knows at her feet, introduces another dimension to the power relations of mankind. In learning about power relations between the genders through his relationship with Sophie, Emile is meant to come to terms with the power relations prevalent and existent in society. An understanding of the power relations between men and women where women rule men through their charms and by being 'arbiters of taste', ensures that Emile fully comprehends how the ideal state may rule her citizens by instilling in them a love of virtue, justice and wisdom, and how citizens can

administer the state by protecting these same virtues she embodies. This understanding enables Emile to come to terms with power relations among citizens, between the state and the citizen, and between the lawgiver and the citizen. So doing, enables Emile to reflect on the power relations he always had had with his tutor, who in carefully stage-managing his life, teaches him how he must live in accordance with the precepts he has imbibed, the wisdom and virtue he gains from Sophie, and the general will in modern civil society. In short, by instilling in him a love of virtue, justice and wisdom, Sophie completes Emile's education as a man and equips him for his role as citizen.

Indeed, Sophie's position as the custodian of order and morality in the family (which is the foundation for social and political life) intimates that she is capable of developing a sense of justice.[170] If she were not educated as she was to be the personification of *la patrie*, Emile would not know how to love or to temper his passions. He could very well have turned into a creature so consumed by love for his own that he places his family's interest above the public interest. Thus, far from being truly 'subordinate' to Emile as feminist readers of Rousseau and writers such as Kate Millet and Simone de Beauvoir claim, Sophie is as dependent on him as he is *dependent on her*. Rousseau's gender-based separate gender-based educations of Emile and Sophie are political because they highlight the *mutual dependence* of the citizen and the state.

Emile depends on Sophie to complete his education so that he will come to acquire the virtues necessary for being the ideal citizen. Emile needs Sophie to teach him how to love wisdom and its attendant virtues so that he will be capable of feeling for his fellowmen and equipped to 'play his part in society without degenerating through the evil

[170] Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981, pp. 189 ff. For more on women and the state, please see Carole Pateman, '"The Disorder of Women": Women, Love and the Sense of Justice', *Ethics*, 91, 1980, pp. 29.

influences' as a citizen (Em IV, 215). Likewise, Sophie depends on Emile to protect her and the virtues she inculcates in him. Upon 'wisely administer[ing] those in her domain by instilling in them good morals and a respect for laws',[171] Sophie inspires Emile to protect the virtues she embodies. Sophie 'depends on [Emile's] sentiments, on the value [Emile] sets on her merit, on the importance [Emile] attaches to her charms and her virtues' (Em V, 364) in order to maintain her influence over him. In so doing, she prevents Emile from falling prey to the corrupting influences of existent civil society, and through Emile's love for her and her merits, Sophie protects herself as the ideal state from falling prey to those desirous of corrupting and perverting the virtues she embodies.

In short, their relationship is one of reciprocal dependence. The state of being dependent on another is part of the human existence. Rousseau himself stresses, 'the most necessary art for a man and a citizen… is knowing how to live with his fellows' (Em IV, 328), for as soon as man 'loves, he depends on his attachments' and becomes linked to his species so much so that he 'think[s] and feel[s] in common with others (Em IV, 233). Moreover, Emile's and Sophie's different educations are supposed to complement each other so much so that he will be a complete man and citizen, and she, an economic and political power. Unlike Plato who constructs human dependency in terms of his tripartite soul and division of labour in the *Republic*, Rousseau constructs human dependency in *Emile* through his gender-based theory of complementary characteristics and different educations.

[171] Rousseau, *Political Economy*, p. 20.

Summary and Conclusion

Therefore, by dedicating one book of *Emile* to Sophie and sexual politics, Emile's education is completed. Rousseau included the section on Sophie to demonstrate how Emile must acquire love for wisdom, virtue and justice that is represented by Sophie before he can become a father and thence, a citizen. By devoting himself to his family and being faithful to Sophie and her virtues she symbolises, Emile learns to be a good citizen, mindful of the state's role in making him what he is. As the ideal state, Sophie 'gives Emile [the citizen] new reasons to be himself…' (Em V, 433), thus warranting his devotion to her and all she represents. This love for the ideal state compels the ideal citizen (Emile) to protect her and shape her so that she will not be despoiled and corrupted by others (especially 'foreign conquerors' or other men). Similarly, in permitting Sophie to shape Emile, his sentiments and mores by inculcating in him a love for wisdom and virtue, Rousseau attempts to prevent Emile's corruption in modern civil society. Armed with the virtues the ideal state has inculcated and inspired in him, and through her governance as well as the tutor's, Emile is able to live in civil society because he will not be easily corrupted by the ills therein. Therefore, the sexual politics in *Emile* shows how the sexes and by extension, the players of the socio-political order, be they citizens or the state, are interdependent.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain."

William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, V.vi.194-196

The sexual politics of *Emile* is frequently interpreted as the power relations between the sexes, where the power is invariably in the hands of the man (Emile) and the woman (Sophie) has no choice but to use her feminine wiles to manipulate the man. However, sexual politics is more than just Rousseau's whimsical need to create a mate for his Emile or to create the ideal eighteenth century women. Rather, it is the creation of the ideal state and through it, the means to which the ideal citizen's place in society will be finalised. The ideal citizen is one who is capable of coping with the exigencies and corruptions of existing society. The ideal state is one who makes her citizens want to be virtuous citizens, thereby protecting them from the harms in existing civil society. The ideal state inculcates virtue in her citizens by teaching them to genuinely desire the general will, which is the desire to secure the common good and common interests of all men. Since the ideal citizen is dependent on the ideal state to shape his mores and enable him to desire the general will, it is clear that they are interdependent.

To demonstrate this, the scholarly interpretations of Emile's and Sophie's educations were examined. Despite Rousseau's claim that 'both [sexes] had the same education', the female is ostensibly taught to be submissive to the male and the male independent. While the female is supposedly subservient to the male, she must guide and shape him to 'love decent things' such as sensitivity, virtue and honour. Yet, in analysing their interactions, Rousseau asserts that the male and female are 'both masters'. With

these seeming contradictions, many debates as to their disparate educations, as well as the nature and purpose of the sexual politics in *Emile* have been stimulated.

To participate in these debates, I have considered the dominant literature on Emile's and Sophie's educations. By analysing the prevalent attitudes towards Emile's education, it was discovered that commentators generally hold *Emile* to be a force in educational thinking as it is believed 'to reconcile nature with history, man's selfish nature with the demands of civil society, [and] hence inclination to duty.'[172] However, they differ in their understanding as to the purpose of his education as some believe it to be a project of moral philosophy, and others regard it as a means to create the ideal man. From these varying outlooks, it was clear that Emile's education was designed to protect him from the ills in civil society. Given that Emile was educated to eventually live amongst his fellows, this is particularly important.

Although Emile was created according to nature in that he is allowed to learn the usefulness of things for himself without adult coercion, Rousseau acknowledges that the pure state of nature 'no longer exists…perhaps never did exist… and probably will never exist'[173] and that 'human nature does not go backward, and it is never possible to return to the times of innocence and equality once they have been left behind'.[174] Bearing this in mind, I believe Rousseau wishes to show how people may best live in the civil state since there is no escape from it. As 'we must not confound what is natural in the savage state

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[172] Peter Jimack, *Rousseau: Emile*, London, Grant and Cutler, 1983, p. 75, and Timothy O'Hagan, *Rousseau*, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 61 Allan Bloom, 'The Education of Democratic Man: Emile', in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Harold Bloom, ed., New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 1988, p. 149.

[173] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'Second Discourse' in *The First and Second Discourses*, Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters, ed., and trans., New York, St Martin's Press, 1964, p. 93.

[174] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues*, The Collected Writings of Rousseau, Vol. 1, Judith R. Bush, Christopher Kelly and Roger D. Masters, trans., Christopher Kelley, Roger D. Masters and Peter G. Stillman, eds., Hanover and London, University Press of New England, 1990, p. 213.

with what is natural in the civil state', (Em V, 406) I believe *Emile* shows how a properly educated young man may be transformed into the ideal citizen who is pure of heart and equipped to live in corrupt society.

An examination of Sophie's education reveals that her education is strictly conventional vis-à-vis Emile's, as she is restricted and brought up in relation to men (Em V, 365). Her presence, her education, Emile's search for her, and her interactions with him highlight the broader issues of sexual politics in *Emile*. Due to this, commentators are spilt in their opinions as to whether Rousseau's project for Sophie is antifeminist or feminist. Those that hold it antifeminist complain that Sophie is educated to be acquiescent to men because she has the potential to corrupt them. On the other hand, other scholars believe Sophie's education empowers her by establishing sexual equality within the confines of the eighteenth century.

Since this controversy surrounding Sophie arose from Rousseau's conflicting views of sexuality and ambiguities of women and sexuality, I contend that Rousseau's exposition of these views of seeks to reconcile them in Emile's and Sophie's educations. Emile and Sophie's educations are reconciled when Emile's search for Sophie takes him into civil society proper where he learns to 'live …and consider himself in his civil relations with his fellow citizens' (Em V, 455). Moreover, in searching for Sophie, Emile learns to find himself in the world of men without degenerating through the evil influences therein.[175] Sophie is able to mould him to the ideal citizen by teaching him to value wisdom and virtue. This is because her education teaches her to use her feminine wiles to manipulate his attraction to her. Sophie's education renders her wise and virtuous because it teaches her about 'our institutions', 'our practices', 'our proprieties' (Em V,

[175] Kennedy F. Roche, *Rousseau: Stoic and Romantic*, London, Methuen and Co, 1974, pp. 47-8

383), how to look beyond herself, 'study the minds of men around her' (Em V, 387), 'weigh public opinion' and judge men (Em V, 398). Therefore, she has the right to counsel moderation, teach her citizens temperance, as well as judge and advise them.

I believe Rousseau seeks to recreate the state because 'there is no longer fatherland for ideal citizens' (Em I, 40). There is 'no longer fatherland' because people have become so selfish, self-centred and corrupted by greed that there is no longer any common good, common social interests or common bonds holding the people together (*SC*, 2.1.1). As the corruption of mankind has wrought the downfall of the state, Rousseau must recreate both. Thus, he educates Emile to be the ideal citizen and Sophie, the ideal state to esteem and depend on each other. Emile is taught to resist the temptations of society and love wisdom and virtue. Sophie is brought up 'conventionally' because a state is formed from human convention. Rousseau justifies the creation of the ideal citizen and the ideal state through sexual politics. Hence, he arranges for Emile to reinforce his natural partiality for 'sensitivity, virtue and… decent things' (Em V, 433) through his quest and love for Sophie. Likewise, Sophie is brought up to be 'decent, lovable, and self-controlled' (Em V, 393), and well-versed in 'ethic and matters of taste' (Em V, 426). As she commands and sustains love by means of esteem, sends her lovers with a nod to the end of the world, to combat, to glory, to death, to anything she pleases (Em V, 393), she is able to compel her citizens to defend her. Thus, this interaction and mutual dependency demonstrates the importance of sexual politics in *Emile* in shaping the ideal citizen and ideal state. In highlighting how men and women are able to 'affect each other in numerous and central ways', Rousseau shows how sex roles may serve

political ends by bringing about certain desirable social possibilities.[176] This is especially pertinent in the formation of the ideal citizen and state for it 'reflect[s] assumptions and choices about what kinds of communities are possible, necessary and desirable.'[177]

Rousseau endorses a conventional view of the family and the naturalness of sex roles, to remedy the lack of a pure and incorrupt state for the ideal citizen (Em I, 40). In so doing, the state is personified as Sophie. Her relationship with Emile is that of a contract. It is not a relationship where the female is subjugated to male oppression; rather, it is one where the state (invariably female) governs the male citizen and where the citizen protects the state.

Until readers realise that Rousseau is not a polemicist airing his views on the creation of the ideal woman, we will continue believing that natural femininity entails domesticity. Similarly, until readers realise Sophie's education and the sexual politics it advance are not literal attempts to render women completely passive but are representations of the ways in which the state shapes its citizens and its citizens come to love the state, romance and dating guides as well as women's dreams will be confined to the parochial private sphere. This examination of Sophie's education and the sexual politics in *Emile* indicates that we have taken all the norms and traditional beliefs on gender too seriously and literally. The gap between the sexes' perceived private and public roles is created by sexual politics where one party attempts to dominate the other instead of working peaceably together. Only upon discarding these restricted outlooks can the old norms be used to bridge the gap created by sexual politics.

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[176] Penny A. Weiss, *Gendered Community: Rousseau, Sex, and Politics*, New York, New York University Press, 1993, pp. 56-57.
[177] Ibid.

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